The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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Theodore P. Ferris: A Protestant Looks At Catholicism

S. MacLean Gilmour • On Being a Protestant

Schubert M. Ogden • Celebrating the Reformation

Buford L. Nichols • Missions Imperative

Douglas G. Eadie • Saved by Faith

Henry N. Hancock • The Greatest Miracle

SIDNEY E. MEAD

EVERYMAN HIS OWN THEOLOGIAN

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PULPIT POST

Right Sermon; Wrong Text

SIR: Your publication of D. B. Watermulder's sermon "Bold Enough to Fail" leaves me limp. To think anyone would ever laud poor Peter as being bold and loyal at the trial of Jesus is incredible. Peter was not *on duty* at that trial. His presence there was with no thought of helping anyone. His loyalty and devotion, superficial enough at best, had for the time turned to cringing cowardice. With an oath he denied he even knew Jesus, and repeated the denial. To compare Peter's denial with the "failure" of the cross or with Martin Luther King's brave words to his Montgomery congregation is truly short of blasphemy. The man has something in the idea of the sermon. He hung it to the wrong text. Someone . . . could have suggested a dozen New Testament characters, tall, brave men who found the odds against them at the moment. Stephen the martyr, or Paul in Athens are examples.

J. CALLAWAY ROBERTSON
Richmond, Va.

Contributors, Help!

SIR: "Say what you will about us, but don't ignore us," your editorial stated. After reading about seven issues of The Pulpit, I see that the one requirement a sermon must meet to be included in your magazine is that it be entirely free of an embarrassing relation to the text of the Bible which ostensibly serves as its basis. A corollary of this would be that the sermon must never proclaim the kerygma, must never call men to a decision about Jesus Christ, must never reveal that in him, crucified and risen again, there is atonement and forgiveness of sins. . . . All this is tragic, for it means that in the churches, at least as far as the sermon is concerned, vital religion in the sense of a real God-man encounter is rare. The people are given advice, not Christ.

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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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The Decline of the Clergy, Part Two

TO SAY that ministers need a restored sense of identity is to say that we have lost our Name, that name wherewith we were dubbed by Christ into his service. Victimized by this spiritual amnesia we no longer know whose we are and whom we serve; so the clergy has lost that real glory which consists in a thing's being true to and fulfilling its own nature. Until that is again restored, no substitute for a fulfilled destiny will for long give the clergy persuading power and shepherding influence. If he himself does not know who he is, it cannot be expected that the people shall know who he is. The first duty of the clergy, therefore, is to rediscover what it is, to take to itself once again its lost Name by being that new and special creation to which Christ ordained his intimate disciples. Forsyth, in *Church, Ministry, and Sacraments,* asks of the clergy this searing question: "They are eager to discuss suggestions and devices for getting the message into the people. Has it got them and got them at its mercy? And if not, is it because they have not been accumulating in silence the power of a Redemption *done* on the cross?"

The result of this lack of identity has been that the clergy, not knowing what one thing it ought to do, has dabbled in many things, blithely hoping all the while that some mystic and invisible cord would somehow pull all these scattered functions into one divine purpose. This is evident first of all in the ministerial Accent on Amiability. The clergy has made a fetish, a heresy indeed, out of Paul's "all things to all men." Robertson in his letters wrote, ". . . would to God I were not a mere pepper-cruet to give a relish to the palates of the Brightonians!" The bitter storms which lashed the radical issues to which he gave support are sufficient proof that he was something more than a relish for the palates of a jaded congregation. But the very human desire to be always well received is for the clergy an especially grave temptation, and it is a rare minister indeed who can in truth say with Robertson, ". . . how sternly I have kept my tongue from saying a syllable or a sentence, in pulpit or on platform, *because* it would be popular."

A second indication of that scattering of talents which comes to the clergy from a lost sense of identity is the Resort to Sentimentality. It is not enough for the preacher to say clever words, good words, wise words, words which titillate and rearrange men's superficial thoughts, to give mental sedatives to ease them to sleep at night and tonics to stiffen their backs in the morning, to mildly chide their gross sins and to offer a thin morality for their salvation, dispensing fragrance without form in words which do not touch, are unaware of, or perhaps deny altogether those regions of our being where men cower in their cravenness or tower in the glory of God's grace. That ministry for which culture has supplanted creed, for which democracy is the second of its dual deities, for which sweet platitudes pass for somber and eternal verities has no word for the agonies or our present world and the terrors of the soul. If the minister does not, who will speak to our generation those "potent, solemn, eternal things" which are for our salvation?

The third quality of the lost sense of clerical identity is the ministerial Addiction to Activity. Who is qualified to be all things required of a minister: humorist, administrator, civic leader, politician, writer, psychiatrist, reformer? Yet, thousands of ministers with a kind of reckless gallantry which says more for their valor than for their discretion have accepted the challenge of this multiple assignment. So, like a harassed genie, the average minister has adopted so many forms that he no longer remembers what his true one is. For the loss of a central and essential purpose we have substituted a flurry of activity; we are heavy on action and light on motivation.

It is perhaps not precise exegesis but there is for the clergy nevertheless a strong and applicable corrective in that word which says, "All things are yours, but ye are Christ's." It is one thing to have all the world come to our private dwelling importuning *our* attention, *our* allegiance, *our* support. It is quite another thing to go to all the world, into every nook and corner of its multiplied affairs, with the witness, not of ourselves, but of a God whose love and judgment, justice and mercy, and infallible will shine from the face of Jesus Christ. Is it not probable that the time has swung 'round again when the most practical question that can be raised by those who are called "men of God" is not "What must I do?" but "What must I be?"

KYLE HASELDEN

The Spirit of the Protestant-Catholic Conflict Must Be Love and Understanding

A Protestant Looks At Catholicism

By Theodore P. Ferris

WHEN the average American uses the word Catholicism he invariably means Roman Catholicism. Occasionally someone asks me, "Are you a Catholic priest?" I always say, "No, I'm not." And I say that knowing that I am. I was ordained by my church to be a priest in the church of God, and my church, while it renounced the authority of Rome and many of its practices, never separated itself from the great mainstream of Catholic faith and order. Nevertheless, I say it because I know that the person who asked the question is not likely to be familiar with church history, that I have neither the time nor the inclination to give a brief talk on the subject at that moment, and that what the person wants is a Roman Catholic priest. And that I am not.

I am using the word in the same inaccurate sense this morning. When I speak of Catholicism, I shall be using the word in its popular, not its accurate, meaning. I shall not have in mind the great Eastern Orthodox Church, or the churches of the Anglican Communion, or even the Methodists who in the creed profess belief in the "holy Catholic Church." I shall be referring to something much smaller, more specific, more precise — the Roman Catholic Church.

When I chose the subject, I knew that I could only explore the fringes of it. I was also quite aware that the subject is charged with controversy, and that even within our own ranks there would be differences of opinion. I do not enjoy controversy and, if possible, avoid it. On the other hand, I knew that it was a subject of vital interest to all Christians, especially in this country and at this particular time. My intention is not to raise more dust than is already contaminating the air we breathe, but rather to lay some of that dust and to inject into the atmosphere whatever reconciling influence I can by looking at the facts as objectively, sanely and realistically as possible.

When the average American Protestant looks at Catholicism, what does he see? He sees an institution magnificently organized, with at least 1,500 years of experience behind it and, in this country, growing by leaps and bounds. In the United States the number of Catholics has increased by 47.8 per cent since 1949, and in 1959 there were three and one half million more Catholics than there were in 1958. In the last ten years one and one half million people have been converted to Catholicism.

A Formidable Exterior

The sight of this institution frightens him. First, because it is so big and so thoroughly unified. Granted that within the Catholic Church there is not the complete unity that the Protestant is likely to think there is; nevertheless, in contrast with his own smaller and pitifully divided institutions, the Catholic Church presents a unified front which by its very massiveness frightens many a Protestant. Something about big things frightens us. Big buildings overwhelm us; big nations scare us; big business corporations make us uneasy — especially if we are engaged in operations that are smaller, less thoroughly organized and therefore less efficient. This may not be a rational or a justifiable fear, but it is a fear, none the less.

The Protestant's fear of the Catholic Church is increased when he sees what great power the church has over the lives of its people. He sees Catholics go to church regularly every Sunday, not because they feel like going or because it is convenient for them to go or because they like the priest. They go because the church tells them that they must go. He sees them confessing their sins to a priest before they receive Communion, not because they want to or because they receive some therapeutic help from the exercise, but because the church requires them to do it. He sees them refusing to use contraceptives in the planning of their families, not necessarily because they believe that contraceptives are wrong, but because they are forbidden by the church. He sees them staying away from a moving picture or not reading a certain book, not because they choose to, but

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cause the book or the picture has been banned the church.

His daughter falls in love with one of their ys and, though she cannot sincerely become a tholic, if her husband is to remain in the church must be married by a priest of the church and e must sign a statement promising to rear her ildren in the Catholic Church, and if a marriage a Catholic and Protestant should unfortunately d in divorce, he has seen the Catholic husband married by the church on the grounds that nce the wife was not a Catholic, there was no ue marriage in the first place.

I am not saying that all these Protestant fears re justified or that there is nothing to be said the other side. What I am saying is that they re natural and understandable. I am not asking e Catholics to change their position on any of ese matters, knowing that in good conscience ey cannot. What I do ask of them is not to be rprised when Protestants are frightened of an stitution so vast and so powerful, which exercises ch great authority over its people. We have had me rather bad experiences in the past with thoritarianism when it got out of hand, and it s only natural that we should be wary of it when ve see it in the Christian church, and especially hen we Protestants who believe ourselves to be ncere Christians, are often treated — courteously, be sure — as though we were entirely outside he realm of Christian grace. If Catholics could ee this and make allowance for it, not interpret t as sheer bigotry, some of the tension between s would be relaxed.

On the other hand, if Protestants could see nd admit that such great authority cannot and oes not rest entirely on fear, that it must meet most cases, at least, a willing response in the inds and wills of the people, and that some of he Protestant grumbling is not so much a sign hat we think the Catholic Church has too much uthority, but rather a sign that we know that we ave too little — if Protestants could see and admit this, even more of the tension would be relaxed.

The Threat of the Unknown

It is not only the size or the power of the Catholic Church that frightens the Protestant, however; it is also the fact that it is so strange to him, almost completely unknown. If he has been brought up in a Protestant community, what goes on behind the doors of the local Catholic Church is a mystery. He seldom goes inside except to a wedding or a funeral, and what he sees and hears then is so strange to him, so foreign to anything that is familiar to him that he is ready to agree with the first person who says that it's all mumbo-jumbo. That's what it sounded like; that's what it looked like; that's what it must be!

It is a commonplace to say that we are afraid of the unknown and strange. People whose way of thinking and speaking we do not understand are, consciously or unconsciously, rationally or irrationally, a threat to us. Once they are no longer strange to us, though they may still be quite different from us, they cease to be a threat. If the Protestant could ever get close enough to the Catholic Church to have some intelligent knowledge of what is going on, some of his fear would disappear. He might still be just as firm in his Protestant convictions as he was in the beginning, perhaps firmer, but more intelligent, more understanding, less fearful.

How many Protestants know what the most intelligent Catholics believe happens in the Mass? How many have ever read a serious article or book on the meaning of confession and absolution or on the role of the saints in intercessory prayer? Perhaps many have, but I doubt it; and my doubt is based upon the comments that otherwise intelligent Protestants are continually making to me on these very subjects. About Confession they say that a Catholic, unlike a Protestant, can do anything he wants because he can go to the priest on Saturday and be forgiven, and then go out and commit the same sin again. Even I, who am not so well informed on these subjects as I might be, know that such a statement as that is a gross misrepresentation of the best Catholic teaching about Confession.

I stress the word "best." Every institution, religious or secular, is represented by good, not so good, and poor specimens. I say that every institution should be judged not primarily by its poor specimens, but by the best ones it can produce. I can think of a good many Protestants whom I should not like to represent me in the final judgment, nor would I want their version of my religion to be the only evidence considered in an examination. The Catholics have a right to the same consideration.

On the other side of the fence, most Catholics know very little, if anything at all about us. I often meet Catholics who are dumbfounded when they discover that we celebrate the Holy Communion, and some are even surprised when they are told that we believe Jesus is God Incarnate. In other words, there is tremendous ignorance on both sides and, at a time like this when Christian forces should be consolidating, we cannot afford such unnecessary ignorance.

Distorted Christianity

Another reason why so many Protestants are afraid of Catholicism is that they see in it teachings which they sincerely believe are a distortion of the Christian gospel. When they see the mother of our Lord gradually elevated to a position virtually equal to that of deity, they are troubled.

When they see the mystery of life after death more and more departmentalized and the status of the individual soul more and more controlled and determined by the prayers of the faithful here on earth, they are disturbed. When they see scholarly investigation of the Scriptures hindered and hampered by authoritarian control, they are alarmed. When they see the church in places where it is powerful make life and worship for other Christians both difficult and dangerous, they are fearful; not only that their own right to worship may someday be challenged, but that the basic freedom from legalism which Christ died for and which St. Paul lived to proclaim is in real danger.

I do not minimize these serious differences between us. I myself feel strongly about them, but I am also aware of the fact that the modern Catholic in this country looking at the modern Protestant in our land has his own grounds for real misgiving. Protestantism, I am bound to admit, has often wandered so far from the real intent and spirit of the gospel that it has sometimes become not much more than a secular club. If we as Protestants have good reason for thinking that Catholics often fly too high into the clouds of mythology and magic, Catholics have good reason for thinking that Protestants often fly so low that they never get off the ground of materialism and the American way of life.

Again, I say that if both sides had the grace to admit this, we would take a great step forward toward a better understanding of those we disagree with, as well as be in a stronger position to face the colossal issues of our day, and face them together, bringing to bear upon them the whole weight of the Christian witness rather than a fragment of it.

Duty-bound to Reconcile

You can see by now what my position is. I am not a Catholic in the sense in which I am using the word, and I never expect to be. But I am a Christian and I hope by the grace of God to remain one and, little by little, become a better one. As a Christian I believe that I have been reconciled to my fellow men and to God by Christ, by his life, death and resurrection; and I also believe that I have been sent by him to be a reconciling influence in the world. This is true not only of myself but of all Christians.

We cannot by waving a wand wipe away long-standing antagonisms between members of a family, between nations whose interests conflict, or between divisions in the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, it is our solemn duty to do what we can, and I believe that we can do far more than some of us are likely to think, not by getting our dander up, not by losing our temper or by stiffening for a fight to defend what we choose to call our honor and integrity; but by following the example of our Lord and Master; by being, like him, both firm and gentle, neither condoning what we seriously believe to be wrong nor condemning those who do it; and by being at all times charitable.

No one can say that there is a shortage of opportunities for Christians to play their reconciling role on the stage of human history. There are parts for everyone and one of the best places to begin is in the household of our own Christian faith, to do what we can to bring about a better relationship between Catholics and Protestants.

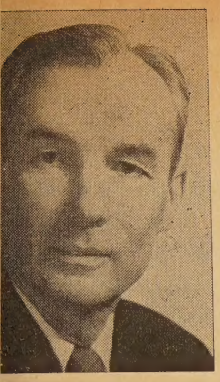
To do this there are fundamentals which must be assumed from the very beginning: (1) Both Catholics and Protestants are Christians, believers in the same God, followers of the same Lord, nourished by the same Scriptures, and loyal to essentially the same faith. (2) What Catholics say and think about us as Protestants has nothing whatever to do with our attitude toward them. If they wish to exclude us in any way from the fellowship of the Christian faith, that is their responsibility, not ours. (3) Fear that is due to ignorance is inexcusable under all circumstances. Fear that is due to the ways of an institution that often seems to us to be overbearing gives us no excuse to go and do likewise. (4) Fear that is due to real differences that exist between us is no excuse for us to imitate the very things we fear, or to refuse to continue as diligently as we can to understand them while at the same time we conscientiously stand for the things we sincerely believe.

The world today is in desperate need of the vitality of Christian love. It is, so far as I can see, its only hope. If we do anything to dilute or dissipate that love, if we overlook any possible occasion to bring that love to bear upon the terrible tensions that are tearing the world apart, we shall be guilty of neglect of duty and of failure in our unique mission. We may never succeed in bringing about one harmonious household of Christian faith, but if we do not try to do it, and if we are not willing to accept the suffering and humiliation that it may involve, we have no right to claim to be the followers of Him who gave his life that we might live.

THE CHOICE

Poignant is the crying
of the hungry for bread;
But louder cry the fearful,
"See how far they forge ahead!"
Though we conquer outer space
and ignore our brother's plea,
How bitter, then, the fruits
— how vain the victory.

KATHERINE L. RAMSDELL



Everyman His Own Theologian

By Sidney E. Mead

THEOLOGY, for many Americans, has become a mysterious pastime, the preserve of minary professors and some overly intellectual inisters who, so far as the people in the pews re concerned, are likely to be invisible six days week and incomprehensible on the seventh. here are many reasons for this, chief of which that in an era of specialization theologizing self has become a speciality, just as there are pecialists among doctors, lawyers and engineers. nd it is good that in our modern world we have me technical theologians who are specialists.

Now and then one or another of these theogical specialists writes a book with some variant f the title, *Theology for the Layman*. But too ommonly their conception of a layman is another pecialist, or at least someone acquainted firsthand vith their theological jargon. Of recent years one night suppose from listening to some of these pecialists that theology is the peculiar forte of uilt-ridden neurotics who, insulated from the ctual conduct of a church, usually in well-appointed and sometimes luxurious offices, produce ooks and sermons advising men to mope, grovel nd grope through the surrounding gloom, and to eel deliciously sinful if perchance they catch hemselves hoping for the betterment of some hings in this world, or trying to stimulate men o do good works. One might suppose that they hink it was man and not the serpent who was condemned to crawl upon his belly.

From Specialist to Layman

I should like to see every thinking lay person stand up on his own feet and become his own theologian. I should like to see theology carried out of the study and into the home, the shop, the street, and yes, even into the tavern. Perhaps because I am not a specialist, this seems to me to be possible and desirable. So I rush in where the angelic specialists fear to tread.

My first premise is that theologizing is merely an attempt to think in systematic fashion about one's own elemental human experience, and about the conclusions one draws therefrom regarding the nature of human life and its possible meaning and destiny. The hypothetical Mr. Everyman does this every day, or at least he does it in those terribly quiet and lonely hours of the night when the sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care eludes him and the questions of whence, why and whither haunt his soul. These are the perennial questions of all religion. I sense in most of the people I meet a strong desire to talk about these things, to compare notes with their peers, but an equally strong reticence or shyness that commonly blocks their attempts to do so. I think there are two primary reasons for this. The first is that for a hundred years religion in America has been predominantly sentimental and its intellectual muscles flabby. So sentimental and thin has the tradition become that the grand themes themselves — creation, sin, redemption, alienation, reconciliation, God — are likely to seem to us either unreal or sticky.

The second is that thinking about these themes has been relegated more and more to genuine or self-styled specialists, more inclined to dogmatize at, than to reason with, the people. But the Lord himself is reputed to have said, "Come now, let us *reason* together," or, rather, "let us reason *together*" and "let *us* reason together" about these matters (Isaiah 1:18). We are all concerned about the perennial religious questions, and reasoning together about them can be and should be an interesting and exciting venture for any person or group.

But where do we begin? My advice is begin by forgetting for the moment the specialists and the vast reaches of knowledge compounded in systems during two thousand years of Christian history. These initially intimidate one by making him

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fearful to reveal his own ignorance and ineptness. It is a simple fact that one must begin where he is with what he has. Neither God nor man can ask any more of one. This does not mean that we begin with nothing. We are sons and daughters of our culture, and heirs of a long religious tradition. This tradition we know in general and in outline. And though we may know it only in the dramatic story of man's sinfulness and redemption, of his alienation from his God and of his reconciliation.

But my second premise is that these traditional themes originated as descriptions of profound human experiences, and can be seen to be such. Once so seen, they can be understood by us. And only when they are thus understood can they be intelligently accepted or rejected. I do not begin with the assumption of the finality of the terminology of traditional Christianity, or suppose that man's redemption depends upon acceptance of it in its form of solidification in the Creeds and Confessions. But I do think we should give our long religious tradition a break by trying to understand it as best we can with the minds we have. For only when we understand it can we talk cogently about retaining or outgrowing our heritage.

Re-examining Traditional Themes

Let us now look at some of the traditional themes in the light of these two premises. I think that all men experience order and regularity in their universe. The sun sets, and the sun also rises. The seasons follow one another with regularity. Heavier-than-air objects when released fall toward the earth. All men are born, and all men die. In these matters there is an inexorable inevitability so far as human ability to do anything about them is concerned. Experience of these matters may inspire in men awe, or wonder, or fear, or rebellion, or it may challenge them to "subdue" the world and "have dominion" over all things therein. In high religions it inspires all of these feelings.

The Christian doctrine of creation is descriptive of this experience of order and regularity in one's world. The first words of Scripture are, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and there follows a description of the stable, ordered things of life: the day and the night, the sea and the land, the vegetation and the animals each "bringing forth after his kind," and finally of the man — the peculiar thing in the whole creation, made in the image of God the creator, made to "have dominion" over all else. Man, it is suggested here, is peculiar in a way that is descriptive of common human experience. On the one hand, man is an animal of the animals, subject to the inflexible regularities of the universe — primarily to the cycle of birth and death. So the preacher could say, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." "To everything there is a season," and "that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts . . . as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath. . . . All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

But this is not all that is to be said about man as we know him, in our own experience, through our observation of ourselves, of the people about us and through our study of the past. For, on the other hand, within the broad context of the ordered universe in which we "live and move and have our being," man himself creates the orders within which he lives his life — the social, political and economic systems: the institutions of marriage, family, church and state, and all the others that go to make up society. In all these systems and institutions which are the creation of man, the common ideal is that of order. In their creation man acts as God, that is, he participates in the creation of the world in which he lives, and insofar as he thus participates, he is as responsible for it as God is.

Image of God as Creator

In doctrinal terms, the image of God-as-creator in man is the image of regularity, balance of part with part, order, law, justice. Justice in the order created by man is analogous to the regularities of nature created by God. But the great and obvious difference is that the world of order which man creates is never perfect or complete either in conception or in operation. Hence man finds that however he intends and strives to create the good order of law and justice, imperfection and evil are also built into it. The great burden of this common human experience found voice in Paul's lament, "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

This is, perhaps, the basic fact derived from the observation of human experience and the reading of our own hearts: man is not perfect, in the sense that none of his creations achieve the perfect regularity and order which is ideal justice. In other words, man is finite, man is not God. A recognition of this fact ought to be manifested in humility; the man who really recognizes this walks humbly in the sight of his God. It is man's reluctance and common refusal to recognize this, the essence of his finiteness, that traditionally has been described as sin. Sin is descriptive of an attitude, not of acts. Death is the constant, inescapable reminder and symbol of this finiteness. Therefore it is significant and important that the archetype of all sin in our tradition, as pictured in the third chapter of Genesis, is that man believed the serpent, the symbol of untruth, who told him, "Ye shall not surely die." This was the biggest of all the big

es perpetrated in human history. Sin enters hen man forgets his finite creaturehood and egins to think he is God, or a god.

The central facts about man, then, are two: iat he is not God, and that he seems always to end to forget this and to think and act as if e were. This is a matter of observation and xperience. Abraham Lincoln, who was harassed y ministers who thought they spoke for God nd as God, could say that the Bible tells us iat all men are sinners, but he reckoned we vould have found that out merely by keeping ur eyes open and looking about us and into our wn hearts. Now, sin may, on the one hand, e self-conscious and voluntary. This is because ian is free to choose; and he may out of his own ride and selfishness, out of the deceitfulness f his own heart, deliberately choose to act like God. He may act, for example, as if he had infinite visdom, as if he were absolutely right. "If I am iot God's mouthpiece," said Billy Sunday, "come ip here and tell me so." And since no one did, he implication was that he *was* God's mouthpiece nd hence absolutely right.

Victims of Our Achievements

But, on the other hand, sin, or acting like God, is involuntary and inescapable. Human beings are inconceivable except in the context of the orders or institutions of the society which hey create. But once these orders are created, man, living with and within them, finds that he cannot avoid acting at times as if he were God. Thus the husband, the wife, the parent, the teacher, the judge, the governor, the president, must all make decisions as if they possessed infinite knowledge and wisdom and sympathy — in brief, as if they were God. This, I take it, is what Paul meant by man's bondage to the law. Man is bound to the orders that he himself has created and, because of his created nature, could not avoid creating. Sin in this sense is the price of what order and justice man achieves. I suppose that this is what Christians have meant traditionally, or should have meant, by original sin — the sin in which man is unavoidably involved in the very act of being a human being. Hence, as Paul puts it, "through the law [itself] cometh the knowledge of sin."

Granted this kind of involvement, the question arises, Should men feel guilty about the sinful acts which they cannot avoid committing? I do not know. But whether in some abstract sense they should or should not, the simple fact is that people do feel guilty. Every honest person in one way or another, at one time or another, has cried out with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And that publican, Jesus added, "went down to his house justified." It was as simple as that. This experience of mercy and forgiveness is almost as common in human life as the experience of guilt for wilful and unavoidable sin. In fact, in our world it is so common an aspect of our everyday experience that often we fail to recognize it or its significance. But no day passes when we do not forgive a husband, a wife, a child, a teacher or someone in a responsible position for what they wilfully or unavoidably do. The image of God as creator in man — the image of perfect order, law and justice — serves to make man aware of his own finiteness and sin. The image of God as Redeemer in man is the image of love and forgiveness. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." It is love that delivers up from our guilty bondage to order, law, sin and death.

Image of God as Redeemer

But how? What is this experience of redemption, of being saved from sin? First, let me suggest, redemption does not pluck man out of the created order of nature or extricate him from the meshes of the orders which he himself has created. "Saved" or not, one is still subject to the cycle of the seasons, to death, to the law of gravity. Likewise, "saved" or not, men are still responsible for the creation, the instrumenting, the working and the consequences of their orders or institutions made in the image of the God of justice. Jesus, the Christ, called Redeemer and Savior, was crucified, finally, by the representatives of the Roman Empire. And Rome in our tradition stands for and is the symbol of law, order and justice. Jesus, although he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," was caught up in the intricate web of human law and justice and crucified, perhaps with the best of intentions, certainly in the interests of the best human order then possible to instrument.

Wise men of the day — chief priests, scribes, and elders — scoffed, and in their scoffing revealed that they conceived of salvation as removing a man from subjection to the order of nature and the order of human justice. "He trusted in God," they scoffed, "let God deliver him now . . . for he said I am the Son of God." "Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." And so they mocked, "He saved others: himself he cannot save." In effect what they were saying was, let him demonstrate his escape from the image of God as creator in man, and we will believe him. But actually what was demonstrated was that such escape is impossible for anyone in this world, however Godlike he may be. And because of their total misunderstanding of what was taking place before their eyes, Jesus breathed one archetypal prayer, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But, we are told, there was also a Roman centurion present, and to him it was given in a

flash of insight to understand the meaning of what had taken place. We may suppose that a centurion would be a rather hardened soldier, probably not particularly noted for sensitivity to human suffering, nor gifted with poetic or any other kind of imagination. What he saw was just another crucifixion which must have been "old stuff" to him. What he heard were the last forlorn words of this Jesus of Nazareth: "My God, why hast thou *forsaken* me?" "Why hast *thou* forsaken me?" "*Why* hast thou forsaken me?" And what the centurion said was, "Truly this *man* was the Son of God." "This man *was* the Son of God."

And there, I think, the story should end. Beyond that there is nothing more to be said, except, perhaps, "It is finished." What was finished? The portrait of man as the image of God, and, conversely, man's portrait of God as both Creator and Redeemer. Man is seen, on the one hand, as the image of God as Creator. This is the *visible* God — visible, and hence known to all men, in the orders of creation. As Paul says in the first chapter of Romans: "Since the beginning of the world the invisible attributes of God, e.g., his eternal power and divinity, have been plainly discernible through things which He has made and which are commonly seen and known." This is the God of perfect order and regularity, in whose image man aspires to perfect law and justice and by that fact finds himself evermore frustrated, defeated, broken on the wheel of his own finite, human limitations. But, on the other hand, in the events of the gospel story man is seen as the image of God as Redeemer, the God of the mercy and the love which reconciles man to God, to himself and to his fellow men.

His Reflection in Everyday Acts

On the one hand we know as a fact of human experience that in one way or another, as is said in II Corinthians, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive . . . according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This refers to the human experience of the inexorable sequence of antecedent and consequence, of cause and effect, which permeates our universe. This is the experience of the God of judgment of whom, with Lincoln, we may conclude "as was said three thousand years ago, so still must it be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" But we also know, equally as a fact of human experience, that there is love, mercy and forgiveness among men in our world to be found in common, everyday acts such as sharing bread and wine, in a kind of relationship, that is, between quite ordinary people. And in these common acts of common people is imaged the God of redemption, the God of whom it is said that he was "in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and [he] hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

We know God as Creator in the regularity of his inexorable judgments which are built into the structure of the universe and mirrored in the orders of man's society. And, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear what is done and said among men every day, we may also know the Christian God as Redeemer, whose inexhaustible love is potentially ever present in all human relationships and is made manifest wherever two or three people meet together with charity in their hearts. Christ, we are told, "is the image of the invisible God," for *this* invisible "God *is* love" and "if we love one another," he "dwelleth in us." Therefore with Paul we may exclaim, so long as love and forgiveness exist among us,

> I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ PRAYER never causes me any effort. When I pray I know I am addressing the Deity, but when I preach, the devil may be among the congregation. — *George Matheson*

✚ LANGUAGE most shows a man; speak, that I may see thee! — *Ben Jonson*

✚ AS A PREACHER, Mr. H. was sincere, but not earnest. He was a good and conscientious man; and he made a high valuation of the pulpit as an organ of civilization for co-operating with books; it was impossible for any man, starting from the low ground of themes so unimpassioned and so desultory as the benefits of industry, the danger from bad companions, the importance of setting a good example, or the value of perseverance — to pump up any persistent stream of earnestness either in himself or in his auditors. — *Thomas De Quincey*

✚ THAT kind of iteration is the most hurtful of all things . . . seventeen sermons on the doctrine of retribution as it is found in nature rather tires a man out. — *Beecher*

✚ ORDER is Heaven's first law. — *Alexander Pope*

✚ THE WORD makes men free. Whoever cannot express himself is a slave. Speaking is an act of freedom; the word is freedom itself. — *Ludwig Feuerbach*

What It Means To Be a Protestant

By S. MacLean Gilmour

WHEN I was a sophomore in college I decided to become a candidate for the Christian ministry. That spring my church sent me as student minister to a small mining settlement on ne northeast shore of Lake Manitoba. On the rst Sunday of my tour of duty I preached to my nall congregation in the village schoolhouse on What It Means to Be a Christian." As the new eek wore on I was seized with a state of panic. On hat first Sunday I had preached all that I knew. had proclaimed the whole "gospel according to Gilmour." In my extremity I wrote to my father, minister of long standing and rich experience, nd he sent me a supply of his manuscripts. So, for he rest of the spring and summer, my patient congregation at Steep Rock listened to many very good ermons on many different facets of the Christian aith. My sermon title on this occasion also covers lot of territory, but "What It Means to Be a Protestant" is somewhat more manageable within wenty minutes than "What It Means to Be a Christian."

The name "Protestant" was originally pronounced Pro*test*ant. It is derived from a celebrated Protest signed by Lutheran princes in attendance at the imperial Diet of Speier in 1529. These first Protestants not only protested the attempt made by Roman Catholic members of the Diet to legislate against the Lutheran Church; they also protested — that is to say, asserted, affirmed — a positive faith, a faith that Melanchthon was to formulate in 1530 as the "Augsburg Confession." Protestantism, then, began as a revolt against corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church, but also, and more significantly, as the affirmation of great doctrines: Jesus Christ as the only Head and Savior of the church; justification by faith; the priesthood of all believers; and the authority of the Bible. Protestants may still be called upon to protest against corruption in religion, but their real function is to exhibit the power of the faith that is in them, to protest the truth as they see it.

Jesus as Lord and Savior

We Protestants believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head and Savior of the church. There are serious limits to our knowledge of the Jesus of history. Pagan literature makes no references to Jesus prior to the second century, and the few there are then add nothing to our store of information. The epistles of St. Paul contain very little of the Jesus of history for it is the crucified and risen Lord that overshadows all else in Paul's gospel. For information about Jesus we are virtually restricted to the four Gospels. One of these, the Gospel of John, is a book written out of faith for faith — a portrait of the Christ of faith rather than a picture of the Jesus of history — and of the remaining three Gospels, two are dependent in large part on the third.

Nevertheless, we know enough of the Man of Nazareth who trod the fair, green hills of Galilee to compel our devotion. In the desert we see him spurning the easy and conventional alternatives to vicarious suffering. In the garden we see him resolutely renewing his dedication to the will of God in his blackest hour. On the cross we see him triumphing over what would overwhelm any lesser soul. And all this bows us in penitence, wakens us to hope and summons us to similar commitment.

Forgiveness has an imperative that it would not have were we to consider it apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Absolute trust in God and obedience to his will have more meaning because of the experience in Gethsemane and the ordeal on Mount Calvary. Purity, compassion, humility, fidelity and aspiration are woven into the fabric of our Christian idealism, not just because they are injunctions in the Sermon on the Mount, but much more because they were exhibited and illuminated and irradiated by Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Paul stated the doctrine of justification by faith

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to explain his own discovery of the redemptive power of God in Jesus Christ. As a Jew he had believed that God would declare a man "just" at the Last Judgment by virtue of his fulfillment of the regulations of the Jewish Law, by virtue of what the apostle called "works." The Law laid down rules by which a man could fulfill God's will. God would "justify" or "condemn" a man at the Last Judgment in the light of his record. But Paul's own experience had convinced him that by his own efforts he could not possibly make himself righteous in God's sight. He might will what is good, but the power of sin was such that he found himself doing the evil that he would not, and leaving undone the good that he would. Christianity opened up a new way of salvation — a new way of redemption — apart altogether from the Law. By faith, by the glad, ready response of the whole man to God's gracious gift of salvation in Christ, by faith Paul found himself accepted by God in spite of his sin and remade as a new creature by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Roman Catholicism in Luther's day had become a new and crass legalism. Roman Catholics claimed that merit in the sight of God could be won by adhering to the laws of the church. They also held that it could be awarded by priests and purchased by men in the form of papal indulgences. Luther reached back to Paul's Epistle to the Romans for the great slogan of the Reformation — justification by faith, and by faith alone. For Luther, as for Paul, the basic content of faith was man's response to God's gift. Neither Luther nor Paul would have reduced "faith" to the mere acceptance of a body of dogma. Faith is an act of the will rather than an act of the intellect. God in his love and mercy has opened up a new way of salvation in Jesus Christ. In Christ he has provided a new means of access to himself. Faith is the act by which we appropriate that good, glad gift of God's grace. Faith on man's part corresponds to grace on the part of God. Furthermore, faith results in a new way of living. Man becomes the vehicle of the Spirit of God that is in him. "Good and pious works," said Luther, "do not make a good and pious man, but a good and pious man does good and pious works." St. Paul put it more succinctly: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Priesthood of Believers

We Protestants believe in the priesthood of all believers. The earliest statement of the doctrine of apostolic succession in Christian literature is in a letter of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, written about 96 A.D. and known as the Epistle of I Clement. The author, who appears to have been the secretary of the church at Rome, sought to support the authority of the bishop at Corinth in a situation in which the bishop's authority had been challenged by a group of young rebels. Corinthian Christians, the letter asserts, must respect the authority of the bishop in all things, for the bishop had received his authority from his predecessor who in turn had received it from Peter who in turn had received it from Jesus Christ. The bishop of Corinth was therefore the representative of God on earth, Christ's spokesman for the Corinthian faithful. With the growth in power and prestige of Rome in the Western church, the Roman bishop or pope was able to assert more and more authority until in time the Roman church could impose its claim on the whole of Latin-speaking Christendom — the claim, namely, that the Pope held the power of the keys and that he was Christ's vicar upon earth.

Martin Luther and his associates and successors in the work of the Reformation repudiated the authority of the Pope. Not only so, but they also propounded the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. In part this doctrine was a negative one. It denied that a succession of popes and an order of priests were the mediators of God's grace. The early Protestants asserted that men have only one mediator and redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. From the beginning, however, the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers meant far more than a declaration of religious freedom, far more than the assertion that every man is his own priest. The wider meaning of the doctrine is that every man is his neighbor's priest; every believer is an agent of God in the proclamation and commendation of the gospel. We Protestants believe in the mutual ministry of all believers.

The Protestant minister is set apart by the church, by virtue of his calling, character, disposition and training, as a man competent and fitted to give special leadership and to assume special responsibilities on its behalf. The minister is to be a channel of God's grace to God's people, and at his best he fulfills that function. But he is not the sole channel, nor at times even the most important channel. Every believer is to be a minister to his fellows of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The church is a fellowship of men and women with God through Jesus Christ that bridges the oceans, crosses the continents, enfolds the centuries and overreaches life and death — a fellowship that transmits God's reconciling and redeeming love in Jesus Christ in the lives and deeds of all its members, and in which each member gives as well as receives.

The Authority of the Bible

We Protestants believe in the authority of the Bible. In a sense it is true to say that the Christian church always had a Bible. The Bible of the early church was the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew original of what we call the Old Testament. In addition to the Septuagint, the

words and acts of the Lord Jesus were remembered and were regarded by the church from the beginning as an authority for faith and order, life and work. In the course of time these traditions of the Lord Jesus were committed to writing and were eventually included in what the church came to call Gospels. In the course of time, also, letters that Paul had originally written to individual churches were collected, and other letters and writings that had proved permanently useful for the inspiration and discipline of Christian faith and work were accorded a status of authority. By the end of the second century most of what we call the New Testament was already in common use as Scripture in the world-wide church, and by the end of the fourth century all parts of Christendom had reached agreement on the twenty-seven books that now constitute our New Testament.

In medieval Catholicism the authority of the church came to be regarded as greater than the authority of the Bible. The Roman Catholic hierarchy held that the Bible, in the Vulgate or Latin version, could only properly be interpreted by the church, speaking through its popes and priests, and the Roman Catholic Church bitterly opposed Luther's translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and the Greek into vernacular German, and Tyndale's later rendering of Scripture from its original languages into English.

Protestantism has always held that the Bible is God's Word to man, the standard for all Christians in matters of faith and practice, and that without the interpretation of any pope or priest it can speak directly to the mind and heart of every believer. In this respect all Protestants take their stand with Martin Luther. In 1521 Luther was summoned by the emperor Charles V before the imperial Diet at Worms. Ordered to recant his heretical doctrines, Luther refused to do so in a speech delivered first in Latin and then in German. Unable to understand either language, Charles V demanded what he called "a plain answer." "Your Majesty requires of me a plain answer," responded Luther. "I cannot recant unless I am proved in the wrong by Holy Scripture or adequate argument. I cannot act in opposition to the dictates of conscience and the Word of God. Here I stand. So help me, God, I can do no other!"

At times the Protestant witness to the authority of the Bible as the standard for Christian faith and practice has been confused and befogged by literalism or misrepresented by allegory. At times the phrase "The Bible says" has been nothing but a device for reading one's own or one's church's dogmatism into the pages of the sacred book. At times Protestants have misused the Bible as a textbook on geology, anthropology, cosmology or political science. But at its best Protestantism has known that the Bible is the record of God's revelation of himself to his people Israel, to the extent that they were able to understand and appropriate it, and of his revelation of himself to the church in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. At its best Protestantism has known that it is Jesus Christ who gives meaning to God's manifestation of his will and purpose in Holy Writ from Genesis to Revelation and that in it that Word still speaks to every reader who is prepared to listen.

We Protestants believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head and Savior of the church; in justification by faith; in the priesthood of all believers; and in the authority of the Bible. May we show forth our faith, not with our lips only, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to the service of God and by walking uprightly before him.

An Autumn Prayer

WE BLESS Thee, O God, for the beauty of autumn, for the loveliness which greets our eyes on every hand. Truly thou hast made everything beautiful in its time for shrubs and trees are aflame with the colors of the sunset. May the beauty which belongs to the various seasons of life be manifested in us also so that in the passing years our lives may grow richer and deeper, more beautiful to behold.

We have reveled in the luxuriant growth of the summer season, in the myriad leaves which made each tree a thing of beauty. Now, after touching them with the magic of unimaginable transformations, thou hast set them adrift that we might see the framework which supported the soft greenery of the warm summer days. Tall and gaunt and naked they stand and yet there is strength and stately symmetry which speak to us in unforgettable language. When all the beauty of youth, the tenderness and fervor of the middle years, the deeper sympathy and understanding of the autumn of life shall have taken their departure, may there be left to us strength of character and the firmness of those convictions which have sustained us through life.

Grant unto us that as the tree sends out its roots and anchors itself in the depths of earth where storms cannot penetrate, we might also send out our roots and anchor them in that reality which is thyself. When the winter is past thou dost bring out new leaves and new beauty for those trees which have weathered the storm and the blast. Help us so to live and love that when the springtime of our souls is at hand, we too shall enter upon a new and rich and abundant life. We pray in the name of Him who came that we might have life and have it abundantly. Amen. — *David T. Erickson, First Baptist Church, Arlington, New Jersey.*

The Right to Celebrate The Reformation

By Schubert M. Ogden

I TAKE as my text this morning a verse from the third chapter of I Corinthians: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." My reason for choosing this text is simple: Today is the Festival of the Reformation, and this text seems to me, as it has to many another Protestant preacher before me, to be peculiarly fitted to speak to us on this occasion. More specifically, this text tells us two things that we ought to keep in our hearts and minds as we recall the momentous event which this day celebrates.

I

In the first place, it tells us that we have every right to be in this place at this time remembering with gratitude and pride the events that we are celebrating. This is the underlying point, of course, of the somewhat confused metaphor in which Paul speaks of the church as a building whose sole foundation is Jesus Christ and then goes on to talk about the various building materials that might be used in erecting a superstructure on this one foundation. What he is trying to say when he refers to gold and silver and precious stones and then to wood, hay and stubble is that there is both good building and bad and in the consuming fire of God's final judgment not every structure reared on the church's original foundation will be able to stand. In other words, he attempts to convey the seriousness of all facets of our work in the church. Whether we are systematic theologians who labor to express the "church's one foundation" in adequate conceptual forms or whether we are practical theologians who seek to translate this foundation into the concrete structures of public worship, what is involved whenever we undertake to express our faith is something genuinely important. And the same holds true of every other aspect of the church's unending task of expressing and proclaiming the gospel in all the phases of its common life. In expressing our faith in any of the many ways in which it can and should be expressed, we are engaged in a work in which something really significant is at stake, even if, as Paul hastens to suggest, what *is* thereby at stake is not our personal salvation. Even if, as he says, one is not himself lost simply because his work in the church is finally shown up as inadequate, it is still true that there is an important difference between good work and bad and that each of us is held strictly accountable for doing just as adequate a job at his particular tasks as he is capable of doing. Each of us is required, as he puts it, to "take care" how he builds on the original foundation, lest he be found to be building with stubble rather than gold. And this means, finally, that each of us must take care that he lays no other foundation than that which is already laid in Jesus Christ.

The only really true foundation that we as Christians have any reason to deal with is the unconditioned and all-accepting love of God that becomes concretely manifest to us in him who is the Christ. Nothing, absolutely nothing else, however valuable or important it may be, has this kind of real foundational significance. If, in the final analysis, our lives are meaningful and worthwhile, this is only because we can never be separated from the love of God save by our own willful refusal to accept it — and even then he continues to love us even if we do not love him in return. All our good works, all our significant social and cultural accomplishments, indeed, all that we can ever have or be, can never provide a real foundation for our existence. The only basis in which we can possibly find true and abiding security is that love which will not let us go and in which even now we are completely known and forgiven. Therefore, the only true adequate work in the church must be that which makes absolutely clear that there is indeed no other

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foundation than this one that is always already established in the love of God in Christ. In short, to build with gold and silver and precious stones rather than with wood and hay and stubble means to bring everything into captivity to Christ and to give to nothing else the foundational significance that belongs to him alone.

But it is just because our text says this that it tells us we have every right today to celebrate the Festival of the Reformation and to do so, moreover, not only with thanksgiving, but with a bit of pride as well. For what constituted the Reformation in its fundamental intent and accomplishment was just this kind of building with gold rather than with stubble, or, in other words, taking care that no other foundation is laid by the work of the church than the one that is already laid in Christ. Whatever its failure in concrete cases and however much it may have lacked of success in realizing in fact all that it could and should have realized, the Reformation was nevertheless the one great period after the apostolic age in which the church's manifold work was most nearly accomplished. Thanks to the Reformers, Paul's demand that no other foundation be laid than the one that is laid in Christ was once again taken with seriousness, and the necessary reformation of all phases of the church's reality — its faith and order, its life and work — was powerfully begun. Therefore, there is every reason why you and I who stand in the tradition of this Reformation should not only give thanks for it, but also take the same kind of pride in it that Paul obviously takes in his work when he says, "According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation." Our text tells us that there is a difference between good work and bad, i. e., between work that does and does not give adequate expression to "the church's one foundation." In so doing it grants us the right to celebrate the event of the Reformation with unrestrained enthusiasm, insofar as the essential feature of the Reformation is precisely the adequacy of its expressions of the common faith. That our text does not give us the license to excuse our own inadequacies by hiding behind the achievements of the Reformers hardly needs to be emphasized. But what we should emphasize is that we do have the right to look with gratitude and pride upon the work of the Reformation and, insofar as we ourselves in our own work actively stand within that same Reformation tradition, we can similarly look upon our own work as well.

II

But at this point we would do well to remind ourselves that our text also tells us something else, namely, that we nevertheless finally belong to no one or no thing save to Christ alone and through him to God. Thus Paul tells us that we are God's temple and that it is his spirit that dwells in us. And then, in the concluding verses of the chapter, he affirms that all things are ours, but that we for our part belong solely to God. "So let no one boast of men," he says. "For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." In thus affirming that all things belong to us rather than we to any of them, Paul obviously has in mind the party slogans of the Corinthians, "I belong to Paul" and "I belong to Apollos," which he refers to earlier in the chapter. And in reversing these slogans, as he does, what he evidently wants to tell us is that we can finally belong to no one or no thing but God in Christ and all things else, whatever they may be, can never be our masters but only our servants.

In other words, our text would tell us that we can no more finally belong to Luther or Calvin or Wesley or to any other reformer, for that matter, than we can finally belong to life or death, or to the present or the future, or to any other creaturely thing. While we may and indeed should do our work in the church as adequately as we can and in so doing, may and should also identify ourselves in some sense with the work of the Reformation, we ought never to suppose, at the peril of our damnation, that we "belong" to this work or to any of those who have led in its accomplishment. So, far from our belonging to the Reformation or to the Reformers, it is rather it and they who belong to us. Our final belonging is to God alone, and because this is so we are radically freed from belonging to anyone or anything else, save in the strange sense in which the master may be said to "belong" to his servant. If we are really and authentically Christian, we have no master save Christ, and all things else, including persons, are not our masters but simply our servants.

There is perhaps no clearer statement of this same point than one that Luther himself has provided. "I ask," he says, "that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians. What is Luther? My doctrine, I am sure, is not mine, nor have I been crucified for any one. St. Paul, in I Corinthians 3, would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I, poor, foul bag of worms that I am, come to have men give to the children of Christ a name derived from my worthless name? No, no, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names, and call ourselves Christians after Him Whose doctrine we have. The papists have a party name deservedly, because they are not content with the doctrine and name of Christ, but want to be papist as well. Let them be papist then, since the pope is their master. I neither am nor want to

be any man's master. Christ alone is our Master, and He teaches me and all believers in one and the same way."

III

Now it is this twofold Word that our text would speak to us on this Reformation Day. We can rejoice in the Reformation and give thanks for the work of the Reformers because the demand to do the best we can possibly do in our work in the church is a divine demand that stands over every Christian man. On the other hand, however, we should never destroy the temple of God which we are by deceiving ourselves with the notion that we finally belong to our work or to those who have led the way in putting that work on its proper foundation. Our ultimate belonging is to God alone and with him, as Paul says, the wisdom of this world is folly. Although our work in the church is of tremendous significance and gives us every right to recall the Reformation with pride and thanksgiving, the only thing that finally counts with God, as indeed the Reformers themselves never tire of reminding us, is the "foolishness" of faith working through love. Therefore, we must heed the warning of our text that if anyone among us "thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise"; for only in this way can we take with complete seriousness the Word of the text that "no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Pastoral Prayers

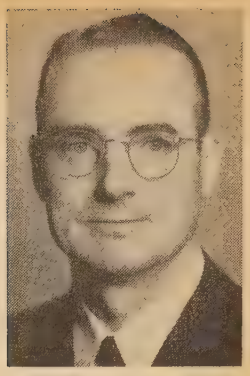
ALMIGHTY GOD, we praise thee for thy glorious majesty and power which have been made known to us in the magnificent works of thy creation. We know thee in the mighty movements of the seasons; in the beauty of sunsets; in the growth of life from childhood to maturity. But, because we have tried to see the greatness, we have often failed to understand that these manifestations of thy power are the results of many small things. Make us more attentive to the deeds which seem insignificant but which determine what we are and the influence that we have. Stop our careless words which offend others and which we excuse by saying that we did not mean what we said. Help us to know that every word to our fellow is important. Forgive our inconsideration of others as we seek the favors of those who are like ourselves, while neglecting the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Forgive our destruction of another's character where, by small talk or the carrying of false tales, we add a little gossip here, a revengeful word there, until we destroy a life by our little acts of unkindness.

O Lord, we have failed when we should have accomplished in thy name. We are sorry for these, our wrongs. Forgive us and bring us back into harmony with thee. May we know that in every act there is the possibility of a new life, a fresh beginning, a finer companionship in our creaturehood. May we be so concerned with our words, our thoughts, our gestures toward others, our little acts and deeds, that we will make them as holy as every part of life ought to be holy in thy sight. Strengthen us, O God, that we may perform in all things, both great and small, as true children of thy Kingdom on earth. Amen — *Charles L. Bagby, Union Congregational Church, Green Bay, Wisconsin.*

O LORD, our Strength and our Redeemer, it is with much gratitude within that we are here to worship thee in the freedom of conscience. We are indeed thankful for the wonderful privilege which permits us to come to this place of worship where no denominational creeds separate us, where no divisive theological statements bind us, where we think of our fellow worshipers only as Christians, and where the unity of thy church is so evident.

We pray for thy forgiveness and cleansing grace. We are sinful, rebellious, self-willed creatures needing thy daily forgiveness. The sounds we hear in the distance serve to remind us of the sinfulness of all men. Grant that the turmoil which seems to be brewing in this land shall be shortlived and that the clash of weapons shall spare the lives of thy people. Draw near to us, thy children, as we seek to draw near to thee; comfort, cleanse and forgive us this day.

Teach us, Father, that it was in thine eternal goodness that we were born and that in the eternal vigilance of thy providence we are kept every day. Lead us to believe that life is essentially good even when lived in the midst of unusual circumstances. Help us, therefore, to adjust to the conditions of life in this land. We recognize that this country is part of thy great universal vineyard and so we thank thee for it. Grant that our duties here may deepen our understanding for our fellow men all over the world. Make thy holy purposes known to thy people everywhere that we may pray intelligently, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" to the eternal glory of our God. Amen. — *prayed by R. N. Sanders, The Union Church of Tegucigalpa, capital of Honduras, on the morning of the revolutionary outbreak in that city.*



Missions Imperative

By Buford L. Nichols

ALL religions lead to God," declare some, "and Christianity joins other faiths in a common search for truth." The modern missionary movement has brought Christianity and other religions into close quarters. Comparisons and contrasts are voiced and penned on every hand. Let present-day missionary experience speak on these questions of comparison. Hear a voice from the far-flung fringes of the island kingdom, Indonesia.

Structural Form

"The advantage of this arrangement," said my guide, "is that all the gods can be seen by the worshiper as he enters." From that vantage point he gestured toward hundreds of idols displayed in semicircular tiers in the Chinese Buddhist temple. Some idols were near, others more distant; some gilded, others of ghastly shades. But they were all visible, every last one of them. People with sticks of burning incense were bowing here and there, patronizing the idols.

"Show us the Father," requested Philip. "Give us a sign," cried the Jews. This quest for visibility has brought saints and apostles in sculptured form into many churches. The eye wants to see what the heart yearns to worship. But God's laws forbid the making and using of images and idols. Jesus said that to see him is enough. All who have seen him bear witness to his sufficiency. But today we see Jesus by faith, not with the eye. Jesus did not deny the reality and utility of the material and the visible. He left us visible symbols of his sufferings. Visible and tangible was he in "the days of His flesh" upon earth. His presence has honored every atom.

One who denies the spiritual is blind to half the realm of reality. One who lives and thinks solely on the material plane is groping in dense darkness. The idea that materialistic ideology produces material prosperity is foolish. Without a vision people perish, property and all; and crass materialism cannot stimulate the vision which prevents destruction. Both the physical and the spiritual are very real parts of one world. They are two facets of one gem. Both are essential to human life. Christianity does not exalt the one and despise the other. But the things which are spiritual lie closer to the heart-throb of our earthly humanity. Beliefs outlast bread. Ideas are more permanent than iron. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Religion has its structural forms, its expressive symbols. But these must not be confused with the realities which they represent. There is more to religion than that which meets the eye. An arrangement whereby "all the gods are visible" may be convenient for a Buddhist temple. Saints preserved in statuary may be artistic for a church. Symbols are exceedingly valuable when properly used. But these externals are not enough. The seeker after truth must explore beyond these outward forms; he must see "him who is invisible."

Functional Process

"If your religion is so valuable to you," asked my fellow passenger, a Japanese soldier, "why don't you keep it to yourself and guard it closely? Why do you carry it to people in distant lands?"

Our train threaded through countless villages. Our conversation moved along the lines of the functional process of religion. Yes, agreed the Shinto soldier and I, religion is a source of genuine pleasure. Its prayers and songs, its meditations and devotions bring real satisfaction. Personal joy is one of its chief values. Orientals build enchanting rock gardens in the quiet corners of their private yards. There they retreat from the harsh noises of the outside world. Therein they sit musing hour by hour, quoting proverbs and sipping tea, watching goldfish and white swans glide leisurely among

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lotus blossoms — a perfect stage-drop for meditation. To orientals in general and to many other people this meditation for personal enjoyment is the primary function of religion. Religion is private property; build a wall around it; close other people out. Guard it as you would a chest full of diamonds.

But Christianity is more than mystic meditation, more than private devotion. Vital religion is not a nook for retreat into silence but a base of advance in service. The world has not been moved by monks who have hidden in caves for meditation but by missionaries who have gone into all the world preaching the gospel. Hofmann portrays Christ kneeling in prayer amid shafts of heavenly light. Copping pictures him in the role of a shepherd searching through dangerous mountains for a lost sheep. Both prayer and action are parts of the total picture. Another artist depicts the beauty of the Christian life in terms of folded hands in the attitude of prayer. Isaiah describes a servant of the Lord in terms of beautiful feet trekking across mountains on a preaching mission. Folded hands and trekking feet are essential parts of the same portrait. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," exclaimed Paul. The gospel becomes a fire in our bones. We must give expression to it.

The needs of the world make their appeal. The desire to serve arouses. The call of God enlists. A deep-set service motive puts Christians to work at nearby tasks or it sends them to far-off lands, from the smoldering deserts of Arabia to the snow-driven plains of Alaska. And it keeps them happy at their work. The gospel is something we have received, not something we have achieved. We have received it freely and freely we must give it to others. Meditation and action blend harmoniously in our Christian experience. We cannot choose the one and refuse the other. To be so feverishly busy as to have no time to pray and meditate is a sorry state. To be so preoccupied with private devotions as to have no time for gospel witness — to be so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly use — this too is a pathetic plight.

Is the gospel precious to you? Is it your pearl of great price? If so, you have every reason for sharing it with the whole world. The more you share it with others, the richer you become in the treasures of the gospel. We defend our faith by proclaiming it. We lose it when we lock it in our private vaults. The sincerity of our Christian profession is measured by the warmth of our missionary zeal. Have you heard and heeded God's call to missionary service?

Essential Content

"Who is a Confucianist?" I once asked my language teacher, a typical Confucianist scholar. "A Confucianist," replied he, "is one who has studied the Confucianist classics and accepted the truths in their teachings." Religion is to the Confucianist a sort of intellectual experience. Does the mere possession of religious knowledge or biblical information make one a Christian? No. Our Christian experience embraces the volitional and the emotional as well as the intellectual. God's truth is greater than our minds. His Word lights every avenue of our experience.

The view of religion as mere intellectual experience is not limited to Confucianist circles. To take people into church membership simply because they have memorized catechetical answers or creedal statements implies that knowledge is the essential content of religious experience. Knowledge cannot substitute for regeneration. Jesus said to a leader of his day, "Ye must be born anew." This man Nicodemus was not lacking in knowledge, but his knowledge lacked the power to bring new life. The supreme need of his life was spiritual experience, regeneration by the working of the Holy Spirit. That is the basic need of all people of all ages.

The Lord of life unveils the secrets of life. Greatness is achieved by going back to the role of a servant. Heavenly entrance is attained by going back to the state of childhood. Eternal life is received by going back to infancy, back to where we went astray, back to nestle in the arms of God, all the way back to the new birth which brings new life. Does this going-back process mean progress? Yes, it is making progress backward. It is going forward in reverse. The way to God is the path of progress. We come to ourselves when we come to God.

I would not walk across the street to carry religious ideas as such, but for twenty-three years I have been crossing the seas to tell people about Christ. I do not rap on the doors of my oriental neighbors to carry a religious culture, but I go among them to witness to the salvation which I have found in Christ. Christianity embraces both regeneration and knowledge, and it does not set the one over against the other. These two elements should be maintained in proper balance. Scholars, libraries and educational institutions have always marked the course of Christian progress. But without new life there would be no incentive for these achievements in Christian culture.

Vital Objective

My train rolled to a stop in a squalid village in India. Three men caught my eye. They stood stark naked beside the train window, holding up their beggar buckets. "These are our 'Holy Men of India,'" explained an Indian fellow traveler. "They have traveled the path of our Hindu religion until they have reached the final state of perfection." Belief and behavior were harmonized perfectly in this trio of Brahmin holy men. Nudity was a logical consequence of their ideology. Be

ving that all human desires and aspirations are l, they had emptied themselves of these dead- ight things. They had thrown away all earthly ssessions except their buckets. Their humanity s dehumanized. So there they stood: empty thin and naked without.

In the Bible we read about self-emptying. We ıd that Jesus emptied himself of heaven's glory order to enter earth's humiliation. We read that e happy person is the one whose heart is emptied selfishness and sin. But emptiness is not enough. deed, it is not the goal of the good life. Jesus oke of a man who cast out a devil, swept the place ean and imagined that everything was alright. ıt that same devil, watching the last stroke of the oom, came rushing back in with seven others ore wicked than himself. And "the last state of at man was worse than the first." This parable a picture of the futility of trying to empty out il without putting something good in its place. he last state is always worse than the first. Such ouse-cleaning is an open invitation to all demons come in and make themselves at home.

Jesus never taught that by suppressing our hu- an nature we advance toward perfection. It is edeemed humanity, not repressed human nature, at mirrors the image of God. A redeemed life is ill human, inside and outside. Not all the desires the human heart are evil. Priceless jewels are ften found in our earthen vessels.

Fullness is the goal of the Christian life. Empti- ess is but a means toward that goal. We are to be filled with the Spirit," to be occupied by the pres- nce of the living God. We must be emptied of all ne fillings of selfishness and sin, emptied even of ur own emptiness, so that we may be "filled unto ll the fullness of God." The halo of our Christian xperience is not a luminous circle above our eads. It is the glow of Christ's presence within ur lives. It is "the fullness of him that filleth all n all." The perfection of our humanity is not at- ained by putting on fancy garments nor casting off he last thread of clothing. No creature is covered rom the sight of God; everything is naked and xposed before the eyes of Him.

In this sermon there is not one word against Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus or peoples of other eligions. These are my friends, my neighbors ere in these islands. We are members together in he local Rotary Club and we donate our blood at he same Red Cross center. We have many things n common. These friends of other religions come o hear me preach about Christ. My work as a Christian missionary is not to compete with other eligions. The man selling machines does not com- pete with the man selling flowers. The products re different. I am to bring to the people something hat they need, something that only Christ can give.

There is a basis of comparison between the eachings of Christianity and those of other reli- gions. The ethical ideas and moral precepts of Christianity excel in all comparisons, but there are good teachings in other religions. But Christ himself is incomparable. "No mortal can with him compare, among the sons of men." It is Christ that we preach, not just his teachings. It is the incomparable Christ that we bring, not simply institutionalized forms of Christianity.

The Only Approach to God

Many devoutly religious people do not know God. Man can truly know God only by knowing Christ, and Christ is the one sure avenue of approach to God. Eternal life is defined as knowing God through Christ whom God has sent into the world. Are people in distant lands and remote islands lost if they do not know Christ as Savior? Yes, and so are all people everywhere who have not trusted Christ for salvation. In several countries and with three languages I have been pointing people to Christ, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." The one thing that stands out in my memory above everything else is the transforming experience which I have witnessed in people who open their hearts to Christ. Idols go out when Christ comes in. Bad people are made good and good people become better. Barriers to brotherhood are torn down. Life and hope conquer death and despair.

Look full into the face of Christ. Then take a new view of the world about you. Some things fade into thin shadows; others glow with celestial light. The peoples of the world rise into view, their needs and appeals come before you. You view the world through the broad-angle vision of His piercing eye. Look deep into the compassionate heart of Christ. Then microscope your own heart. Do you not feel a deep urge to share the gospel with the entire world? If so, this is the pulsebeat of the Savior's presence. This is your clue and call to missionary service and support. When the chords of Christ's compassion vibrate in your soul, you are not deterred from missionary service by the realization that the various peoples of the world have their own religions. When the full sunlight of God's truth dawns in your heart, you are no longer swayed by the erroneous idea that Christianity is one among many parallel roads which lead to the City of God. But being filled with his compassion and his truth, you are compelled to action by the full consciousness that in Christ alone is salvation, salvation full and free for all, glorious salvation — pardon, purity, peace and power!

Can you say, in the simple testimony of Charles Spurgeon: "I looked at Him, and He looked at me, and we became one forever"? Can Christ say of you: "I looked at him, and he looked at me, and we became one in the search for lost humanity"? Missions is imperative because Christ is incomparable.

Faith Is in the Realm of Meaning, Not the Realm of Fact

Saved by Faith

By Douglas G. Eadie

IT IS a curious fact that the concept of faith, so central and so important to the Christian religion, is also one about which there is the maximum of confusion. One man wishes he had more faith. Another rejoices that he is emancipated from the superstition of faith. For one faith is a painful intellectual problem. For another it seems to be a way of avoiding intellectual problems altogether.

One of the most profound thinkers of our time, Paul Tillich, has this to say:

> There is hardly a word in the religious language which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions and questionable definitions than the word "faith." It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. Today the term "faith" is more productive of disease than of health. Indeed one is tempted to suggest that the word faith should be dropped completely, but desirable as that may be it is hardly possible.*

A serious modern problem is the apparent meaninglessness of life. To many, emptiness and futility are more real than the fear of death or the sense of guilt. Our modern age is one of No Exit, no next step, no sense of direction. If lostness in this century involves the absence of meaning, then salvation must involve its restoration; and salvation by faith suggests the possibility of making sense out of our confused and directionless existence. This is certainly a part of the task of real faith. Faith is the discovery and affirmation of meaning in our total experience. To have faith is to invest our lives with meaning. A saving faith finds significance in our human existence. Faith in God must make sense, not nonsense.

Perhaps this understanding of faith can be clarified by pointing out what faith is not. First, faith is not credulity. Credulity is trying hard to believe the unbelievable. This kind of faith was defined by the boy in Sunday school as "believing something that you know ain't so." It is astonishing how many people think of faith in just this way. I do not know of a single theologian who holds this definition of faith. Nor do most people define faith this way.

But there is another view of faith more widespread but equally inadequate. This is the notion that faith is a substitute for knowledge. Where we have facts we need no faith. Where we have no facts, there we need faith. Faith is necessary to replace our ignorance. This kind of faith is possible only in the realms of darkness and the unknown. As knowledge advances faith recedes. Primitive man believed in Thor, god of thunder. When the thunder roared, that was his voice. When the lightning struck, that was his hammer. Today we hear the thunder and we see the lightning but no one believes in Thor. The advance of science and the facts of meteorology have made it impossible. But this is not the meaning of the Christian faith.

Christian faith in God operates in the realm of meaning, not in the realm of facts. It involves the discovery of meaning, not the discovery of facts. At its best faith recognizes facts, uses them and welcomes them; it is not a method of avoiding, obtaining or contradicting facts. Faith is not a substitute for data. It is a way of appreciating data. It is not a temporary proposition to be discarded when the facts are finally in. Rather it has to do with the meaning of the facts. Augustine truly understood this feature of faith when he stated, "I believe, in order that I may understand," *credo ut intelligam.* This is quite different from saying, "I believe in order that I may know," *credo ut sciam.*

Abraham, the man of mature faith, is called by the Bible "the father of the faithful." Yet the most significant sentence ever penned about this creative character is the one which says, "And Abraham went out not knowing whither he went." His faith spoke to him not of the destination of his journey but of its significance. He believed that through his pilgrimage all the nations would be blessed. Through his faith he found meaning for his experience, not a timetable for his travels. When the place of his destination was finally revealed, even then he still needed and possessed faith.

Faith is for advanced man as well as for primitive man, for the informed as well as for the uninformed, for the sophisticated as well as for the simple and for the strong as well as for the weak. Faith is every man's ultimate concern for meaning. Listen to the words of Paul:

> God's purpose is therefore plain: that the blessing promised to Abraham might reach the Gentiles through Jesus Christ and the Spirit might become available to us all by faith.

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* Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957). Used by permission.

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Many of the sermons we publish have to be drastically cut; this one is printed in its entirety as received. The author covered his phase of a vast subject but left us eager for more.

The Greatest Miracle of All

By Henry N. Hancock

And Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. Luke 7:14, 15.

THE HOLY Gospel appointed for today, the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, is the record of the raising to life of the widow's son at Nain. The New Testament Lesson appointed for Morning Prayer on this same Sunday is the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. Only one other incident of this kind is recorded in the gospel, the one concerning the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum. Today, therefore, the Scriptures appointed for our public worship confront us once again with the challenge to our minds, our conscience and our faith of the miraculous element in the gospel records. It is a challenge which we cannot evade, especially in this age of scientific and philosophical skepticism. We come regularly to join in the worship of the church and we hear these Scriptures read week by week, but do we still really believe that Jesus actually performed the miracles of which we read in the Gospels?

Do let us realize that this is not merely a question of whether or not we are credulous or gullible enough to "swallow" uncritically some fantastic and absurd stories about an alleged wonder-worker. The question goes far deeper than that. It involves the trustworthiness and reliability of the gospel records as a whole; and it is upon those gospel records that the entire Christian faith, including its philosophy and its ethics, is founded. Take that foundation away, discredit it or prove it unreliable, and the whole superstructure of the Christian faith and church comes down in ruins. If we cannot trust the gospel record of, say, the feeding of the five thousand or the widow's son at Nain, how can we trust the same writer's accounts of the parables and the discourses? Of course, if this were simply a literary problem, there would be many ways of getting round it; but it is *not* simply a literary problem. A serious moral problem which concerns the very character and personality of Jesus himself is involved. Let us briefly examine this problem.

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This sermon shows how one minister treats and applies the challenge of the miraculous elements in the Gospels.

Inadequate "Natural" Explanations

For the past two centuries it has been the practice of the biblical critics to distinguish between the various types of miracles reported in the Gospels and to group them together as healing miracles, nature miracles and these alleged raisings of the dead. The aim of the critics has always been to find some natural, rational explanation. The basic assumption is that if a so-called miracle cannot be explained rationally or comprehended intellectually, then the record is either deliberately falsified or ignorantly mistaken. Some of the instances of healing, for example, may well have been due to what we today explain in terms of psychiatry. What we now call the psycho-therapeutic healing of mental and nervous diseases was then called the casting out of devils or the exorcism of evil spirits. The nature miracles, on the other hand, such as the stilling of the storm or the feeding of the five thousand, are capable of no such explanation and must therefore be dismissed as fiction, superstition or just plain error.

As for the stories of Jesus bringing dead people to life again, these, it is said, were obviously cases of catalepsy, a state of deep coma which even the physician must be careful to distinguish from death. They were, in fact, cases in which Jesus (presumably by some equally unexplained insight) succeeded in preventing a premature burial of someone who was still actually alive, which not infrequently happened in Palestine in those days. But if all this is true there arises an obvious question: Why did not Jesus explain this danger of premature burial, at least to his disciples, and instruct them in how to deal with such cases instead of allowing both his disciples and the bystanders to believe that he had miraculously brought a dead person to life again?

How can we reconcile such deceit, such charlatanry and deliberate dishonesty with the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount? The other possibility — that Jesus was himself deceived, and he sincerely but mistakenly believed he had brought a dead person to life again — is ruled out by the gospel record itself because in one of these three cases Jesus did precisely what we have said he ought to have done. In the case of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus *did* tell his disciples and the bystanders in the plainest language that, contrary to appearances, the child was *not* dead. Here was one case where Jesus did prevent a premature burial. The mourners were already assembled for the funeral and, if Jesus had not arrived in time, the child might well have been buried alive. But in this case Jesus said so quite clearly, "The damsel is not dead." And nobody believed him. They all knew better and the evangelists tell us that "they laughed him to scorn."

But in the two cases brought before us by the Scriptures for today the situation is entirely different. In the case of the widow's son at Nain the body was on its way to be placed in the burial cave. In the case of Lazarus the body had already been in the cave four days. Let us study the extreme case of Lazarus of which we have a more detailed account. When Jesus said to his disciples before they began their journey to Bethany, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep," the disciples naturally thought that Jesus meant "taking rest in sleep." And so they said, "Sleep will surely do him good; why wake him up?" "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Now this word "sleep" which is used in describing the conditions of both the daughter of Jairus and Lazarus can be confusing in English. But in the original Greek version of the Gospels there is no such confusion. The word used in the case of the daughter of Jairus has only one meaning, "natural sleep"; the word used of Lazarus is the one from which we derive our word "cemetery" and means "the sleep of death." And in order to remove the last possible trace of confusion Jesus said to the disciples plainly, "Lazarus is dead," just as plainly as he said of the daughter of Jairus, "The child is not dead." It is evident, therefore, that Jesus himself was well aware of the essential difference between these cases. And so, if there was any deception, it was deliberate deception.

An Impostor or the Son of God?

Here, then, is the challenge presented to our faith as Christians by the miraculous element of the gospel. We live at a time when the very foundations of our way of life are being shaken, and it seems to me that this challenge calls for a decision from us as individuals, a decision which every individual must ultimately make for himself. For my own part, I find that everything depends on the answer to just one question: "Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?" To this question, frequently asked in the gospel records themselves, there are, I believe, two possible answers and two only, of which either could conceivably be true. One answer is that Jesus is a half-historical, half-legendary figure who was either a deluded religious fanatic or a lying deceiver; one who either willingly or unwittingly became the source and origin of the most cruel hoax that has deceived millions of human souls for the past two thousand years. This is possible. The other answer is that Jesus was and is the self-revelation of God in the only terms we can understand: the terms and dimensions of human life, so that the words and acts of Jesus Christ are in very truth the words and acts of God. This also is possible. There is no third possibility. It is between these two that we are challenged to choose. And choose we must, — every one of us who has heard the gospel's challenge — whether we like it or not, even if we only choose by default. As for me, I am persuaded and convinced by the evidence that the faith of the church is true and on this faith, the ancient catholic faith of the church, I am wagering whatever remains of my threescore years and ten.

Prayer Implies a Miracle

But there is one more factor in this question of the miraculous element of the gospel which I should like to note. It is too big a factor to examine thoroughly now, but it is too important to ignore. It is prayer. It would be difficult to imagine any way, any philosophy of life which could conceivably be called Christian that did not include regular and faithful prayer. But all real prayer implies the possibility of a miracle in the sense of divine intervention in the affairs of men. So again we are faced with an "either . . . or." If we hold a conception of the world as a closed causal system in which so-called "divine intervention" is impossible; if we agree with a contemporary German critic that "it is impossible to make use of electric light and the radio and in case of illness to lay claim to modern medical clinical methods and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles," then we must also renounce any kind of prayer. Prayer, as we have said, implies the possibility of a miracle in the sense of divine intervention and, with every respect to Professor Bultmann, is it not true that among the most fervent prayers are those uttered by patients (and doctors too!) in the most modern hospitals? Therefore, if we are to be logically consistent in our attitude toward the gospel miracles and toward prayer as an indispensable element of the Christian life, then we must either accept them both or reject them both. We cannot have the one without the other.

But when all the arguments are ended, it remains true that Jesus Christ himself is the greatest miracle of all; and the real challenge of the gospel, which is only highlighted and thrown into sharp relief by the Scriptures appointed for this particular day, is the question asked by the Roman governor in Jerusalem: "What shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" And we cannot suspend or reserve judgment on that question any more than Pontius Pilate could. One way or another, we decide, if only by default. From the very fact of our presence here in this church this morning — for we are not under any compulsion, nor have we been driven by fear — it is reasonable to assume that we are not among those who have rejected the gospel in Jesus Christ. We believe in him and we believe in prayer.

May I, therefore, urge you to be diligent and fervent in prayer, not only corporately in the church but individually and personally, that in the same mercy and compassion revealed by Jesus Christ to the parents of a seemingly dead child, to a widow weeping for her only son, and to the grief-stricken sisters at his own friend's grave, God may take pity on a civilization which is indeed sick unto death and call us back from the gate of death and the grave to life in the paths of righteousness and justice and peace.

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

I PREACHED in a neighboring church the other Sunday and had a miserable time. My frustration finds no balm because there doesn't seem to be anything one can do about it. The sanctuary was no cathedral, but it was quite satisfactory. It had a pulpit, an organ, a choir and some pews, and a congregation that filled the pews. But there were present a family with a baby and another family with a restless child who talked. I saw it coming right from the beginning, but when the hymns are being sung or the anthem is loud, a preacher tries to forget these threats. He even hopes that the baby will go to sleep and that the child is anxiously waiting to listen quietly to the sermon.

Well, the time came for me to preach. The sermon may have been no great shakes, but it was my best. I had worked on it all week and here was the half-hour for which all the hours of labor had been given. I started out rather well and the congregation was awake and responsive. Then the baby let out a howl somewhere between joy and anguish. The mother and father beamed appreciatively as if to say that nothing as important had ever taken place in that church. Mrs. Kish says I paused and glared but she has a tendency to exaggerate in such situations. I went bravely on. Soon the small child dropped a book and asked in a loud voice if he could get a drink. He was shushed properly. The baby now came to life again and gurgled and cooed, again to the obvious pride of the parents. Toward the conclusion of the sermon, which by this time was a complete ruin, the baby got the hiccups. Brethren, have you ever tried to conclude between hics? But there was more to come. At the conclusion of the service, the father and mother laughingly related how their baby could not be kept quiet, and the other couple told me, without a hint of apology, that they believed in bringing their child to church "right from the beginning."

Even to have reported this may seriously jeopardize my future. Preachers are supposed to put up with anything and to say a critical word about children in the service is worse than being accused of subversion. Who dares to tell these insensitive parents that they are killing a preacher and upsetting the congregation? Who has courage to proclaim that the worship service is not the place for noisy, restless youngsters? Now let me be clear. I believe the church ought to be family centered and that children should have the experience of worship. But I feel that a church ought to furnish a nursery, and that parents have no right to bring their children to the worship service when they cannot be quiet. When our Lord said, "Let the little children come unto me," he was not standing in a pulpit and he was not preaching a sermon. There is a time and place for all things.

One Sunday night when two little girls were running up and down the aisle, I asked the preacher whose they were. He said, "Mine," and I was so discouraged I never got the sermon off the ground. Once in a seminary chapel a noisy baby ruined me and it turned out to be the offspring of a student preacher. It is bad enough to suffer the results of sin without actually encouraging it.

Finally, three suggestions. First, let some board secretary prepare an anonymous tract on this subject which the preacher might have circulated. He could do something with "if meat maketh my brother to offend," etc. Second, let the seminary counseling departments develop a technique to be used on parents who either cannot read or do not understand that any suggestion is to be taken personally. Third, let us raise a defense fund for the preacher who may get caught in the cross fire between parents and the group-discussion boys. Thus endeth the lesson!

Pitfalls of the Ministry

By William H. Hudnut, Jr.

ONE beautiful afternoon last summer, while sitting with my father on the shore of an Adirondack lake, I asked him to tell what in his opinion are the chief pitfalls of the ministry as he sees them after seventy years as a minister, and with a perspective that few of the rest of us possess. Where is a minister most vulnerable, where does he chiefly need to be on his guard? Here is the list my father gave me, and a paraphrase of some of his remarks.

One failing of many ministers is their susceptibility to praise. A preacher is apt to receive so much adulation that in time he craves it. He needs to keep an active sense of humor about himself and remain humble before God. Who was it that said flattery is all right so long as you don't inhale? Many a man cannot stand hearing repeated remarks like, "That was a most helpful message," and "I do so wish your sermon today could have been preached from every pulpit," without having his head turned and starting to think that he really is a Brooks or a Fosdick. There will always be plenty of kind, well-meaning people to feed his ego, and only through daily commitment of his life and the most rigorous and objective self-appraisal will he be able to keep himself in proper perspective.

A second ministerial shortcoming is oversensitiveness. Many a minister is unduly worried by an unfavorable comment, frets about it, lets it get under his skin and rankle. This, of course, is the other side of egoism. A vain man is defensive, unable to bear criticism, always adept at self-justification and unwilling to accept the truth about himself. He is so fond of his little ego that he cannot bear to have it maligned but must vigorously defend it whenever it appears threatened, with the result that people cannot reach him with helpful advice. Not infrequently I have had a group from another parish say to me after I had suggested that they take their problem directly to their own minister: "Oh, there's no use in going to him; he wouldn't listen. Or if he did, he would only defend himself. A man's oversensitiveness to criticism insulates him from help and prevents learning and growing.

Antidote for Jealousy

Jealousy is another pitfall. If a minister is vain about his successes and unduly sensitive about his shortcomings the chances are that he will be jealous of any colleague who seems to be doing a better job. I have heard ministers complain about their more successful brethren, accusing them of various shortcomings instead of rejoicing in their valiant efforts on behalf of the Kingdom. It is strange how we resent in others the sins we are most apt to commit ourselves. The best antidote I ever discovered for jealousy was to pray for the other fellow's success that he might be used of God, and then to seek him out and really get to know him. It's hard to be jealous of a friend.

Next among clerical failings I would place a hypercritical approach. Many a minister carries into his pulpit a censorious, judgmental attitude toward his congregation and preaches scolding sermons. And oftentimes he carries the same attitude over into his family life. Of course, there are many vexations and disappointments connected with running a church, and a minister doubtless suppresses much irritableness, but surely he ought not to vent it on his long-suffering parishioners or on his loved ones. The parishioner can stay away, and often does, but the family has no recourse.

The tendency to ecclesiastical arrogance is a failing that overtakes some of us. We fancy that our profession separates us from the common run, elevates us above petty rules and regulations, and entitles us always to special privileges, special consideration and special rates. Pride is a poor addition to churchmanship. Some years ago I was asked to baptize my first great-grandchild in a certain church, but this was not permitted by the authorities. I might be present and offer prayer, but I might not administer baptism. Surely arrogance of orders and of liturgy is a far cry from the mind of Christ.

Such failings, it seems to me, point to an undisciplined devotional life. A minister's praying is apt to be too glib. His danger lies in becoming a public promoter of prayer instead of a private practitioner. He calls on others to live on a high level but he himself often dwells on the flats of spiritual mediocrity, with the result that instead of being guided by God, he is frequently guided by expediency, by the prevailing popular opinion or by the state of the budget. In regular private devotion he should offer himself, place his life at God's disposal and seek God's guidance. As he prays after this fashion his ministry will take on power.

Laziness keeps some ministers from both prayer and study. They become adept at rationalization, and because they were up late or because the children are sick or because they have to do errands for their wives, they excuse themselves, when as a matter of fact the underlying cause for missing out on prayer and study is nothing but laziness. To be sure, there are many ministers who are both industrious and disciplined, who have a schedule and stick to it; but there are plenty who keep no schedules at all. Because the minister is largely his own boss, with no one around to check up on him, and because his work is full of interruptions and distractions, the morning hours which should be dedicated to study are often frittered away or whittled down, and he becomes submerged in the details of his calling. Years ago Robertson Nichol called this "being boiled down for the tallow trade." In rushing hither and yon and engaging in a multiplicity of unrelated matters a minister is apt to overlook the few things that are needful: daily prayer and study, pastoral calling and counseling, and writing out the sermon each week. Hugh Black used to advise seminary students to "kiss the foundation stones," and a man needs

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WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, JR., *is minister of Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York. After graduation from Princeton University and Union Theological Seminary, New York City, he taught religion at the Hill School, Pottstown, Pa., and subsequently served parishes in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Springfield, Ill.*

In part this article is a tribute to William H. Hudnut, Sr., who graduated from Union Seminary in 1890 and has been an ordained Presbyterian minister for 70 years. He has two sons and two grandsons in the Presbyterian ministry.

keep on doing that all his life. Allow me to suggest timidity as another shortcoming to which many a minister is prone. Before he knows he finds himself conforming, yielding to popular prejudices and preaching to please the parish palate. He is apt to sidestep all controversial issues, and when it comes to initiating specific measures in his community that will improve civic righteousness, he shies away. We have had recently, both south and north, some glorious examples of ministers who have championed interracial justice in an atmosphere inimical to integration; but it seems to me that on the whole the clergy are fearful of public opinion and uneasy in their prophetic role. It is hard enough to preach the gospel; it is harder yet to apply it. A minister, if he would be a truly Christian minister, needs a lot of courage for the living of these days.

Reflecting Christ's Joy

He also needs an inexhaustible supply of joy, and I would list as a final pitfall of the ministry the tendency on the part of many parsons toward overseriousness. Ministers see so much suffering and sorrow and spend so much time with problem situations that before long, if they are not careful, life becomes for them a burden to be endured rather than a privilege to be shared. Jesus wanted his joy to be in us and our joy to be made full, and one of a minister's highest prerogatives is to reflect his Master's joy. A minister should be gay. Gaiety is a Christian art, and implies a spontaneous joy in living that comes from a high sense of privilege and a deep sense of gratitude toward God for the gift of life. Robert Louis Stevenson said that "there is no duty we so much underestimate as the duty of being happy." A minister's joy should be contagious and creative. The world is full of terrifying problems, to be sure, "but joy cometh in the morning," and the minister of Christ is a herald of that joy. Let him never forget this, for many a problem is only aggravated by overseriousness whereas the solution may be encouraged by the lighter touch, by a saving sense of humor.

"These," said my father, "seem to me to be the chief pitfalls in a minister's path; at least they are the ones into which I have fallen. But despite all our shortcomings, I am strong for the Christian ministry, and at ninety-five I still think it's the greatest of all professions. I think the men in it are on the whole wonderfully fine men, whose virtues far outweigh their faults. I have discussed their weaknesses only with the thought that perhaps some men may be helped. God bless them all, and may they have what Goethe's biographer said he had up to the very end: 'ever-increasing endeavors, ever-widening views, and constant renewal of the springs of life.'"

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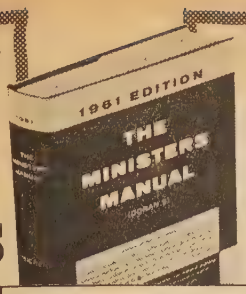

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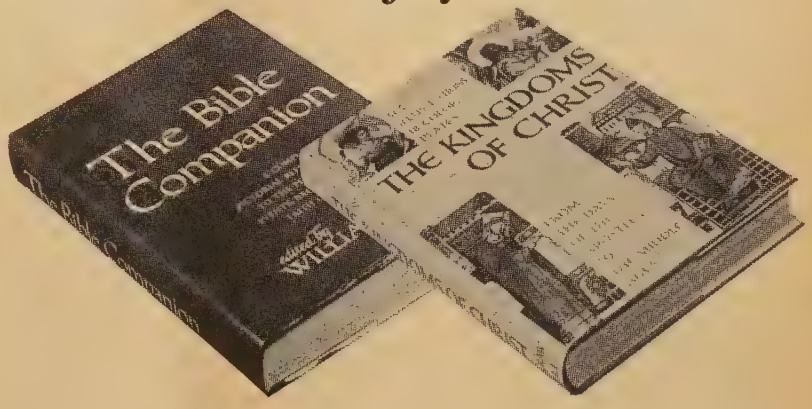

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G. Samaritan: A Very Unusual Outcast

A satire by Norris B. Woodie

JERUSALEM, A.D. 25 — G. Samaritan, member of the 900-year-old segregated clan of Palestine, recently went beyond the call of duty to save the life of a wealthy Jerusalem man robbed and beaten near Jericho. The victim is widely known for his stand against integration.

Samaritan has a very unusual attitude. Interviewed here today, he simply said, "Any man would have done the same thing." What Samaritan did not know — and may not believe — is that two high-ranking church officials, late for appointments at a local shrine, ignored the wounded man's pleas for help. Ironically, these same churchmen declared on TV last week their complete support of the wealthy man's views on segregation. They said: "If God had intended outcasts to be human, he would have made them human."

Rumors are that Samaritan has refused a handsome reward, advising instead that the money be used to finance a police force between here and Jericho. Mutually supported protection on this dangerous strip has long been debated by the two town councils. But judisdictional disputes have stymied action, while merchants of both communities are known to be against the project.

The wealthy man could not be reached for comment.

To top off his very unusual attitude, Samaritan has so far rejected Palestine-Hollywood offers to star in a TV movie series titled "Love Thy Neighbor." Planned for universal appeal, this series will feature a character, Moses, who teams up with his father-in-law, Jethro. Together they ride herd on a camel train of homesteaders in the Mt. Sinai area. They are bound — with a sort of religious fervor — for a rich, promised land. Due to poorly marked trails, the homesteaders frequently lose their way and their tempers, whereupon Moses calms them with a speech about neighborliness. The neighborliness bit will become a trademark, like the western hero who never carries a gun.

In the American version, Aaron (Moses' brother) discovers gold at the base of the mountain. This is in contrast with the Palestinian Aaron who is simply preoccupied with casting golden calves while Moses is away on business. The American version will utilize the 'cowboy motif', but both will be somewhat western. The main action of each version will take place outside a tent housing various religious relics.

Local producers are amazed at Samaritan's attitude. According to one source, Samaritan has the strange idea that he is a sinner and not worthy to be so honored. He has become staunchly aloof, even threatening to leave town until the incident is forgotten. But there may be a lesson for us all in the attitude of this very unusual outcast. By cleverly keeping everybody off balance he is probably holding out for a higher figure.

NORRIS B. WOODIE *is co-ordinator of religious activities at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.*

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Book Reviews

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN. *By Robert W. Youngs. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. $3.50.*

BILLED as a treatise for "people who have lost their taste for insipid Christianity," Mr. Youngs' book is offered as an "elementary survey" of what is involved in being a Christian. "It is," says the author, "a humble effort to present in terms of modern knowledge and experience that rugged Christianity which more than any other way of life has had the power to improve the fate of men and nations." Laymen are the coveted readers, and in so far as ministers are expected to buy the book, it is presumably only that they may place it in the hands of inquiring laymen.

The early Christians, says Mr. Youngs, "distinguished themselves in four notable respects: 1) the beliefs they held; 2) the salvation they enjoyed; 3) the life they lived; and 4) the Church they comprised." These four distinguishing marks of early Christianity become the four principal divisions of the book, and it would probably be accurate to say that the author did not intend any of these sections to be considered comprehensive expositions of their designated areas but only to present those aspects of each area which are peculiarly Christian. The section entitled "The Beliefs of a Christian," for example, contains only the following subtitles: "Beliefs Do Matter," "Jesus, the Christ," "Jesus, the Saviour," "Jesus, the Resurrection" and "The Holy Spirit."

For the most part, the book is written in a simple, forceful, pungent and attractive style. Not infrequent sallies both of humor and of indignation protect the serious material from dullness, and being intended for laymen, the various chapters are commendably free both from needless technicalities and from pedantic condescension. The theology is "middle-of-the-road" with, if anything, a healthy bias toward the conservative side, and if the author makes no attempt to remove all of the mystery from the Christian profundities, neither does he assume that every Christian profundity must be incomprehensively mysterious.

It is inevitable that almost every reader will lay down such a book with certain minor reservations, and perhaps other ministers will share my wish that Mr. Youngs would not describe the gospels as "biographies of Jesus," would not indulge in occasional superficialities like equating sexual sinlessness in marriage with taking advantage of the sexual urge in "a romantic way," would find an unobtrusive device for recording the references which are now omitted altogether, and would discover substitutes for the "old-chestnut" illustrations. Some ministers may even agree with me in suspecting that the book asks the wrong question. Is not a Christian anyone who is a member of the Christian fellowship, much as a Mason is a man who belongs to a Masonic Lodge and a Rotarian a man who is a member of a Rotary Club? Are there not good Christians and bad Christians? And hence is not the real question that needs to be answered, "What does it mean to be a *good* Christian?" or "What makes a Christian Christlike?"

But this book was not meant for ministers. No layman could read these pages without profit, and no minister would err in calling them to the attention of his laymen. — *Roy Pearson, dean, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.*

LIGHT BEYOND SHADOWS. *By R. Frederick West. Macmillan. $3.75.*

IN THIS personal account of a minister's mental illness, the Rev. Dr. Fred West describes his thoughts from the midpoint of his hospitalization until the time that he stood again in his pulpit. The book is a clinical demonstration of the thesis proposed by Chaplain Anton Boisen who believes that a crucial issue in recovery from mental illness is a man's ability to honestly confront his failures. Dr. West describes such a self-evaluation in a night of prayer at Dix Hospital. He had just become aware of his mental hospital surroundings. Humiliating memories from the past poured in upon him. Before God he confessed his deepest feelings and prayed for forgiveness. In the morning new peace entered his life.

In the course of his rehabilitation, the author describes the fear of his first sermon after his recovery, anxiety about acceptance in the community and the trial of "Old Guard" opposition in his church. Although the state mental hospital had offered no guidance for convalescence, his private psychiatrist was a stabilizing influence. Again and again Dr. West recalled the crucial time in Dix hospital when he had learned to admit to himself and to confess to God the fear and defeat of his life. As people saw the strength of his inner experience, they began to seek him out for counsel.

The book closes with an insightful discussion of God and human suffering. Dr. West's writing is a lucid and absorbing contribution to the field of religion and mental illness. It goes beyond the superficial hypothesis that

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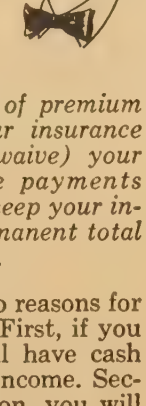

by Andrew Hobart
President,
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congregational demands cause ministerial breakdowns. Dr. West admits that his compulsive church activity was a symptom of unresolved family conflicts. When these conflicts were resolved, he could work creatively with the new leadership of his church to cleanse and unify his congregation. — *Samuel Southard, associate professor of psychology of religion, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.*

MYSTICAL WRITINGS OF RULMAN MERSWIN. *Edited and interpreted by Thomas S. Kepler. Westminster. $2.95.*

RULMAN Merswin (1307-1382), a well-to-do banker in Strasburg, his native city, fell under the influence of Johannes Tauler and the "Friends of God" in 1347, and together with his wife renounced the world. Twenty years later he bought from the Benedictines a nearby cloister, Green Isle, of which he remained the ruler until his death. Although he became the chief author of the Friends of God, it was only after his death that his many writings were found. Reticent about claiming authorship, Merswin appears to have invented a "Great Friend" to whom he attributed some fifteen works and many letters. However, the obvious similarity of style and content with other writings of Merswin and the fact that he is known only as Merswin makes him known, suggest that the "Great Friend' was Merswin himself.

Of the Merswin writings Mr. Kepler has translated *The Four Beginning Years* and *The Book of the Nine Rocks.* The first of these is an autobiography recounting Merswin's renunciation of the world, his intellectual and sensual struggles and his meeting of "the Friend of God from the Oberland." In the second the Holy Spirit instructs Merswin to show the nine steps or rocky planes by which man climbs the ascent to spiritual perfection. Merswin's spiritual anguish is clearly expressed in *The Four Beginning Years.* When divine love falls on him, he hates the world, tortures his body almost to his death. He even presses salt into his self-inflicted wounds. He prays that God will let him become a leper to prove his desire to abandon the world. Of special interest in *The Book of the Nine Rocks* is Merswin's criticisms of the church, from the popes to the laity. "Look about you and see how the popes live in these times and have lived, and see if they are not more concerned about their own glory than that the glory of God be perfected. . . . There have been very few popes in the last years who have not sought their own desires with all their power." And so the cardinals, the bishops, the abbots and abbesses, the mendicants, the teachers, the convents, the secular clergy, the Beguines, the monks — all and together with the secular rulers and the people are utterly corrupt.

Merswin's humane way of dealing with the unbaptized, the Jew or the heathen, is impressive: "When God finds an earnest Jew or heathen, wherever he may dwell, by his free will and his boundless love he comes to that man's help and finds many secret ways to save him. . . . When a good heathen or a good Jew nears death, then God comes to help him and illumines him with the Christian faith, so that he learns the Christian faith and from his heart desires baptism. But if baptism is not available to him and still he desires it earnestly, then God baptizes him in his good intention and miserable death. There are many good Jews and heathens who have entered the eternal life in this way." The documents are uniformly interesting; the translation is everywhere vigorous, idiomatic and clean. — *Fred D. Gealy, The Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio.*

THE SECRET SAYINGS OF JESUS. *By Robert M. Grant with David Noel Freedman. Doubleday. $3.50.*

UNTIL recent years, what has been known of the Gnostics of the early Christian centuries was largely inferential. The polemics of the Church Fathers, notably Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius, were our prime sources. Writing respectively in the second, third and fourth centuries, in the effort to maintain the orthodox tradition, their work remains indispensable to an understanding of the confusion which the Gnostic sects created for the church.

The discovery of thirteen papyrus volumes at Nag Hammadi on the Nile River in 1945 may have been partially eclipsed by the more exciting discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was nevertheless an event of great importance for biblical scholarship. For these Coptic manuscripts of the fourth century, containing forty-nine treatises, provide us with primary sources of Gnostic thought. Of these documents, according to our authors, *The Gospel of Thomas* is the most important.

The form of Thomas' "Gospel" is unlike anything we may have in mind when we use the term, consisting as it does of a series of the "secret sayings" of Jesus. The historical framework of Jesus' life has been dissolved; there is no reference to the beginning, the end or the content of his ministry. The Christ, disembodied so to speak of time and space, becomes the source of a disconnected series of enigmatic, cryptic utterances whose grasp and understanding hold the promise of immortality. Here is Gnosticism with its prideful exclusiveness, its esoteric flavor, its indifference to moral issues, to historic sense, to the depth and profundity of the human problem.

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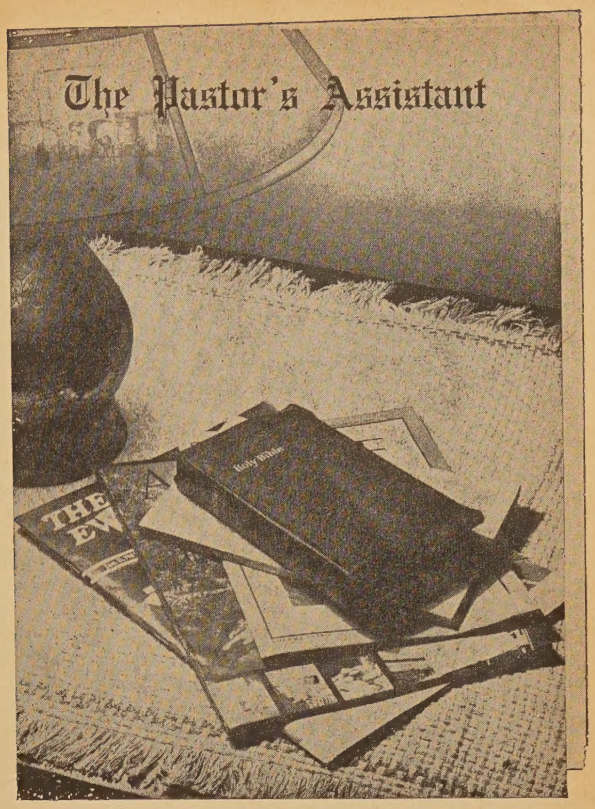

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plete with commentary, relating its contents to New Testament sources, describing the lines along which distortion was accomplished, Drs. Grant and Freedman have well served both the cause of scholarship and the Christian understanding of truth. The relevance of their book is deeper than is at once apparent. For Gnosticism is a spirit first and a doctrine second. As the authors point out, Thomas "is not concerned with what Christians do but with what they know." If such is the case, the 20th century has Gnostics of its own to deal with. — *Charles C. Knapp, First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE MINISTRY. *By Gabriel J. Fackre. The Christian Education Press. $2.50.*

MR. FACKRE presents an interesting, penetrating evaluation of the vital challenge and potential possibilities of the Christian ministry. Particular emphasis is given to the specific opportunities and responsibilities of the mission pastor, yet the principles enunciated, problems, outlines and solutions proposed, are typical for pastors of all churches, large or small. The uniqueness of his fivefold division adds to its effectiveness. These various phases of "The River" are closely interrelated and progressive. Earnestness of spirit is always apparent; suggestions with regard to successful techniques, and warnings against dangerous pitfalls are pertinent. One might wish for fewer, or at least shorter, quotations in the first half of the book; and for less emphasis on the differences between the roles of the mission pastor and that of other pastors. This is a strong, useful book. Its style is clear, concise, convincing. Pastors who read it will gain instruction and inspiration. — *Eugene Dinsmore Dolloff, First Baptist Church, New Bedford, Mass.*

INTRODUCTION TO GROUP DYNAMICS. *By Malcolm and Hulda Knowles. Association. $2.50.*

RENEWAL IN RETREATS. *By John L. Casteel. Association. $4.50.*

THESE two books go together quite well, both for reading and for reviewing. The first on Group Dynamics outlines various approaches to this important new science. The opening chapter on the meaning of group dynamics is followed by chapters on "Understanding Individual Behavior," "Understanding Group Behavior" and "Practical Applications." The last chapter, "What Does It Add Up To?" undertakes somewhat too briefly to evaluate group dynamics. One wishes that more space could have been given to this subject, but the bibliography does give good direction for more extended reading.

The author of *Renewal in Retreats* indicates that the purpose of "retreat" is to provide a favorable situation in which the individual person, freed from the "incessant erosions of life," can experience inner renewal. It is his conviction that the ultimate purpose is twofold: to lead the individual person into a "richer community with other persons in Christ and a truer understanding of our selves." In view of this he feels that "retreat" should be considered an integral part of the church program as it attempts to "express its essential nature." Dr. Casteel has had wide experience both as a "retreatant" and as a retreat leader. He discusses in some detail practical matters relating to techniques, goals, opportunities, instruction materials, retreat centers, daily schedules, leadership and the responsibility of the retreatant. He never permits the reader to lose sight of the over-all objective of retreat, namely: "to prepare ourselves in detachment from our daily life for entering into communion with God." This involves preparation, courage, patience and "waiting in silence before God." — *Stiles Lessly, Thomas Memorial Congregational Church, Chicago, Ill.*

FAITH, FREEDOM AND SELFHOOD: *A Study in Personal Dynamics. By Charles R. Stinnette, Jr. Seabury. $4.75.*

FEW problems offer greater challenge to the best thought of theologians and psychiatrists today than the problem of human freedom, and this book, conceived by a creative and versatile mind, tackles the problem head-on. The author sees clearly that the preservation of man's freedom is part of the larger recovery of authentic selfhood which in turn calls for an analysis of the cultural, psychological and moral forces holding man in bondage and for a restatement of the Christian answer to his predicament. This answer in essence is simply God's gracious action in Jesus Christ meeting man in his lostness and bondage, calling him by his name and setting him within a covenant-Christian community whose worship and nurture provide the communicative and participative relationships within which authentic freedom can be experienced. Stinnette writes from first to last as a Christian theologian, and as such takes his stance against the autonomous, self-sufficient man of the humanist and secularist.

Thus, while this is a book about man and his selfhood, it is also about man's life before God and with God as God saves his people in Christ. And because the author is a churchman as well as a theologian, it is also a book about the church and the Christian life in the church. Many words and concepts in common use today, for example, are given heightened and fresh meaning: "event," "revelation," "redemption," "covenant," "community," "ministry," "liturgy," "participation," "communication," and all are vitally related to the core of Christian faith and defined in terms intelligible to the layman as well as the theologian. Indeed, not the least value of this book is the author's versatility in drawing on the fruits of very wide reading to invoke the insights of psychiatry, modern literature, social analysis and pastoral experience to vivify his theological analysis. Stinnette is on the growing edge of what one might call the contemporary Christian anthropology set within a theology of Christian revelation. — *Paul W. Hoon, Union Theological Seminary, New York, N. Y.*

Pulpit Calendar

Oct. 2 — World-Wide Communion.
Oct. 9 — 18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 16 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 23 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 30 — Reformation Sunday.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.
Nov. 1 — All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2 — All Souls' Day.
Nov. 6 — 22nd Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 13 — Stewardship Day.
Nov. 20 — Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 24 — Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 27 — 1st Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 4 — 2nd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 11 — Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 18 — 4th Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25 — Christmas.
Dec. 31 — New Year's Eve.

READINGS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION. *By Orlo Strunk, Jr. Abingdon. $4.50.*

THIS selection of forty-nine readings from "standard and contemporary literature" in the field of psychology of religion provides a useful resource text. It draws on such authors as James, Hall, Pratt, Starbuck, Freud, Jung, Allport, Boisen. Sections deal respectively with the History of the Psychology of Religion, Religious Experience and Conversion, Religious Development, Aspects of the Religious Life such as belief, faith, prayer and worship, and Religion and Psychopathology. Such a collection, of course, has the advantages and disadvantages of all anthologies in that the readings are of uneven length and quality, but on the whole they offer a helpful overview of a hard-to-find-your-way-around-in field. Previously published in books and journals and here made available in one volume, these readings will be useful both as an introduction to the field and as a stimulus to further study. — *Paul W. Hoon.*

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Montaigne's three worthiest and st excellent men were Homer, Alex- der and Epaminondas. What substi- ions would you make in proposing trinity of excellent men to your ngregation?

•

In *Dr. Zhivago* Pasternak said that ere are two forces at work in the rld: "the cudgel and the inward usic." Or, as we might put it, men no reject the way of the cross soon sort to the use of the club.

•

Good Word for Man:
He is not as bad as he could be;
He can be better than he is;
He recognizes goodness when he sees it;
It was for him Christ died.

•

There is sorrow in the world; be sensi- tive to it.
There is enough sorrow in the world; don't add to it.
There is too much sorrow in the world; relieve some of it.
There is more sorrow than you can bear; rest with it on God.

•

A little boy dances and dashes round the living room on his imagi- nary horse, firing imaginary bullets at imaginary enemies. Suddenly, he stops before his father who, somewhat impa- iently, has been trying to read the evening paper. Quizzically the boy ays to his father, "Daddy, which am , the bad man or the good man?"

•

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"If, for every school that is opened, gambling den, a brothel, and a bar re not closed, the school is useless."

"From the superstition of an in- fantile and ridiculous heaven and hell they have fallen into the superstи- tion of a course, materialistic world."

"The shallower the science of those who possess it, the deeper is their faith in it."*

*(From *The Tragic Sense of Life* by Miguel de Unamuno, reprinted by permission of Dover Publications, Inc., New York 14, New York, $1.95)

Maxims from Bernard of Clairvaux:

"Learning without love inflates one; love without learning is liable to error."

"Security is pleasant to all, but most of all to him who has been frighteneed. The light is a joyful thing for all, but especially to him who has come from under the power of darkness."

"As to merit, it is sufficient to know that our merits are never sufficient. Destitution of merit is surely a pernicious poverty, but presumption of the spirit is a deceitful riches."

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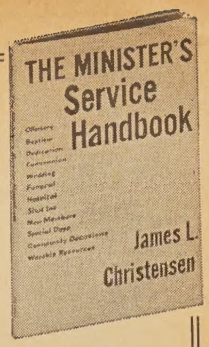

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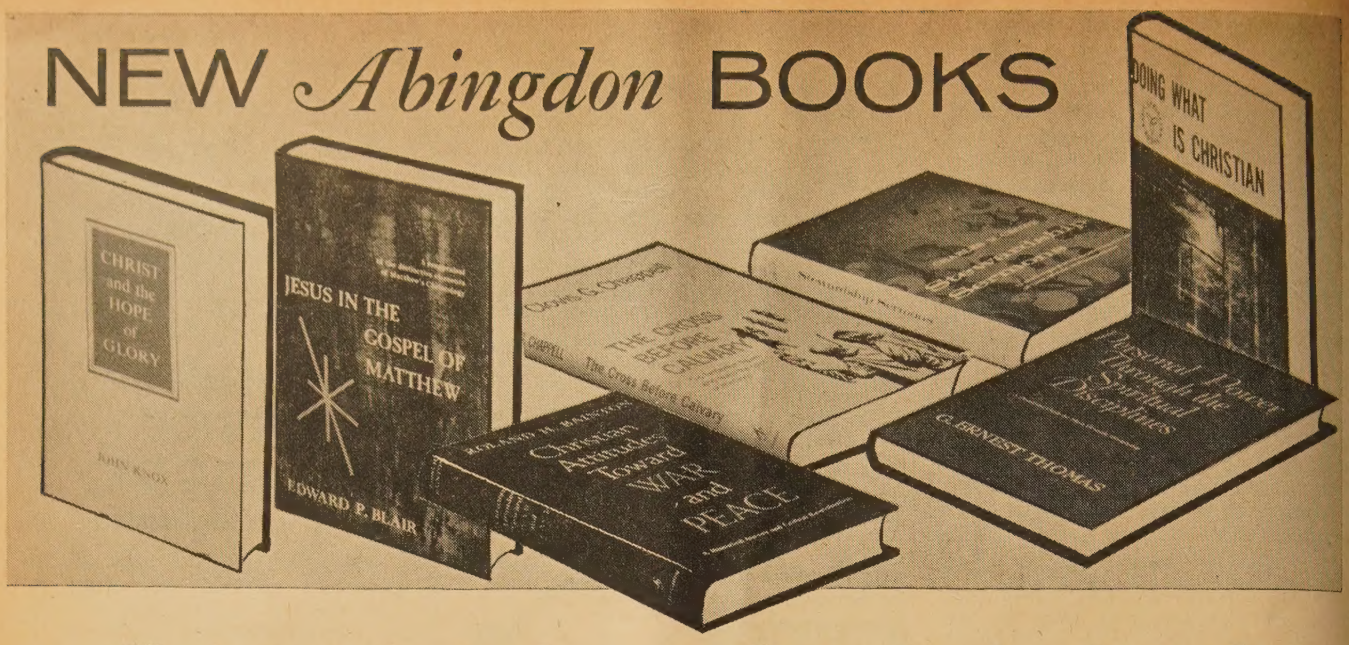
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